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ABSTRACT

This evaluation of the quarter system in Austin, Texas, public schools was designed to assess the impact of changes of calendar, curriculum, and other aspects of high school education. The initial first-year evaluation was intended to gather data that could serve as a baseline for examining the long-term effects of these changes. Data were collected on student achievement, teacher and administrator attitudes, and parent opinion. The quarter system evaluation found that the majority of students, teachers, and parents are satisfied with education in Austin. However, several areas of concern were revealed, including student academic achievement, graduation requirements and preparation of students for posthigh school plans, student advising and scheduling, curriculum, communication with parents, and opinion about the year-round school. Graphs and data tables are included. (Author/DS)

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

1975-1976

Quarter System Evaluation

June 30, 1976

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A Technical Report which presents more detailed data collected during the evaluation of this project is on file in the Office of Research and Evaluation and a copy has also been placed in the AISD Professional Library.

I
ABSTRACT

QUARTER SYSTEM EVALUATION, 1975-76

Description of Program

In 1971 the 62nd Texas legislature passed a bill calling for the implementation of a quarter system in all Texas schools. This system was implemented in the Austin Independent School District beginning in the 1975-1976 school year. The school year was broken down into three quarters instead of two semesters. In addition, a fourth quarter was offered in the secondary schools during the summer; however, tuition is required and the curriculum is not comparable to the other three in variety of courses available. The primary impact of the change to a quarter system has been at the senior high level, where the change was accompanied by a major revision of the curriculum. The number of courses offered by the high schools was approximately doubled; in many areas the variety was increased greatly and sequence requirements and other prerequisites removed. This change was also accompanied by many changes in the way registration takes place, the way teachers are assigned courses, and other administrative matters.

Evaluation Purposes

The quarter system evaluation was designed to assess the impact of these changes of calendar, curriculum and other aspects of the senior highs on students and others. One primary purpose for the first year was to collect data which could serve as a baseline for examining the long-term effects these changes have; another was to pinpoint implementation problems which may call for special efforts from the district to resolve. It was not the purpose of the evaluation during the first year to assess the effect of the quarter system or the curriculum in depth; it was felt that this could more appropriately be done after the changes had been in effect for a time.

Evaluation Activities

The quarter system evaluation gathered data from a variety of sources. Fall and spring opinion data were collected from students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Achievement and attitude toward school data were collected from students. A variety of different data concerning enrollment, attendance, and other student information were also gathered. These data were analysed to provide fall to spring comparisons where relevant, and in some cases to compare to previous years.

Evaluation Findings

On the whole the quarter system evaluation found, as ORE has in the past, that the majority of students, teachers and parents are satisfied with education in Austin. However, there are some specific areas where there were many concerns, and other areas where although the majority felt satisfied, a considerable minority of persons questioned felt dissatisfied with one or more things. These are discussed below.

Concerning the student data, the evaluation also found several areas which may be cause for concern. For most of these, the results cannot be attributed to the quarter system alone, which has been in effect only a year, and it is too soon to see what effect the quarter system, new curriculum, etc., may have on these areas; nonetheless, they need to be watched. Data in some of these areas are also summarized below.

Achievement

The average scores for AISD students on the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) ranged from approximately average in the twelfth grade to below average in the ninth grade. For the writing subtests the scores were below the national average at all grades. In all areas, however, there was an increase from ninth to twelfth grade. The top 25% of AISD students do about as well as the top 25% nationwide, but the bottom 25% tend to perform lower than the bottom 25% nationwide, suggesting that the lower average scores are due primarily to a larger number of students of low achievement.

One other indication of the academic level of AISD students preparing to go to college can be found in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of students from AISD. Austin students have consistently scored between twenty and thirty points higher than the national norms on both the verbal and the math SAT tests. The scores have declined slightly over the last three years, paralleling a similar decline in national scores. The scores for 1975-1976 are not yet available; they will be reported later.

Preparation of Students for Post-High School Plans

There was general agreement that AISD is doing a fairly good job of preparing its students who are going on to college, but also agreement that it is doing less well in preparing students who plan to work. Course enrollments and credits earned suggest that most students take a fairly similar pattern of courses, primarily in required areas, regardless of their post-graduation plans. For college-bound students some areas are rather lower in credits earned by the end of twelfth grade than might be expected--about 2 quarter credits in foreign languages and about six in college-preparatory math and science, for instance. These are areas which would normally be of value to students in college.

Advising and scheduling

This is an area in which a great deal of concern was expressed by all groups. During the fall quarter the schools spent a considerable part of the first quarter simply trying to get students into the proper courses. Data suggest that the best source of advice for students is subject-area teachers; however, some concern was indicated also that there be someone responsible for keeping track of a student's entire program and making sure it meets his needs. During the spring much less concern was expressed about the scheduling and advising processes; familiarity which the mechanics and courses, a new course guide with renumbered courses, and a reduced survey of course interest form all probably contributed to this.

Curriculum

The new curriculum is probably one of the areas where feelings are most divided. Many students and teachers are enthusiastic about the new courses and the flexibility of the new curriculum. However, the variety and flexibility are obtained at the cost of considerably more work on the part of teachers and considerably more responsibility in course choice on the part of students, as well as at the cost of many more incorrect decisions being made. The curriculum is already decreasing in effective size somewhat--by eliminating some courses from the course survey form, the senior highs have reduced the number of courses available to students from about 700 to between 400 and 600, depending on the school. About 30% of the courses in the curriculum are offered at fewer than 5 high schools.

An examination of enrollment patterns by sex and ethnicity indicates that there are some definite differences in the kinds of courses taken by students of different ethnic background, as well as definite discrepancies by sex.

Communication with parents

This is an area where dissatisfaction came through very clearly in some instances, although the majority of parents were satisfied with their communication from the school on various topics. However, a substantial minority felt that they did not know what was going on, whether in the schools or with their children, and were concerned about it.

Year-round school

Teachers and others expressed an interest in year round schools; however, most parents and students and nearly half the teachers would still want summer off, suggesting that it might be difficult to run a four-quarter system on a voluntary basis.

II

DECISION QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

INTRODUCTION

In proper context, the decision questions for an evaluation are formulated by the decision makers involved, with technical assistance from the evaluation staff, during the design phase of an evaluation. When the questions are formulated, evaluation then serves the decision-making process by providing information relevant to those questions and assisting the appropriate adminstrators to arrive at a recommendation concerning the decision. Ultimate responsibility for the decisions always rests with the particular decision-makers charged with that responsibility.

For the quarter system evaluation the decision questions were formulated initially by the senior high principals and the secondary coordinators. They were then extensively reviewed by the Director of Secondary Education, the Assistant Directors of Secondary Education, and others, then reviewed again by the persons who initially formulated them. The final design included 19 decision questions on which a variety of information was gathered.

For the 1975-1976 school year, a different procedure from the past has been adopted regarding the recommendations. Formerly, the ORE staff made recommendations based on their perceptions of the evaluation findings. This year the policy adopted in AISD is for ORE to provide the relevant administrators and decision-makers with a copy of the decision questions and evaluation findings. These administrators will have the responsibility for making recommendations which will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees along with the final report.

It should be noted that, while the information provided here is relevant and useful in making the decisions, other factors also must influence these decisions; some of these cannot be measured in any objective sense; others could be measured by ORE, but can much more easily be assessed directly by the decision-makers involved. Thus, while it is hoped that the decisions made will take into account the evaluation findings presented here, they will inevitably reflect other information which is not documented here as well. This information is indicated in the recommendations forwarded to the Board under "OTHER CONSIDERATIONS."

A. SYSTEM-LEVEL QUESTIONS

1. Should the Austin Independent School District work to have the state mandate for the quarter system rescinded?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

The information relevant to this decision will continue to be collected for several years. During the 1975-1976 school year the evaluation collected baseline data which will be used to examine the results of the quarter system as it becomes established. At present there are many problems associated with the implementation of the quarter system, but many of these are decreasing with experience. Data gathered over the next several years will give a clearer picture of what problems are permanent and what the long-term effects of the change are.

Among the kinds of information gathered as baseline data are achievement scores, study habits scores, graduation and drop-out rates, attitude toward school, attendance rates and others.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.
Miscellaneous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

2. Should Austin move toward some form of year-round schooling?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Most parents would prefer that their children have summer terms off.

The majority of teachers favor year-round schooling; however, 40 to 50% would prefer to have summer off.

The majority of students would also want summer off. However, nearly a fifth would be interested in attending all four quarters.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 5, 29.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

3. Should the Austin Independent School District continue the revised curriculum, including the expanded number of electives and the larger number of courses?

RELEVANT INFORMATION:

The number of courses in the semester curriculum was approximately 350. The nine high schools made available on the course surveys for the coming year between 412 and 588 of the 700 courses in the new curriculum.

During 1975-1976 the average number of different courses in a quarter taught at the high schools ranged from 159 to 279.

Approximately 70% of courses taken by students in AISD are in required areas.

College-bound twelfth graders have an average of about 15 credits in non-academic areas other than PE by the end of winter quarter.

Students feel very strongly that the variety and choice of courses are desirable. They also feel that they are learning at least as much as under the semester system.

The majority of parents feel that there are not too many electives; the percent has increased slightly since fall. However, about one-quarter do feel that there are too many electives. The majoritv also feel that the number of courses offered is satisfactory, and that their children can obtain the basic skills he needs as well as under the semester system.

Teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum; in spite of problems such as large numbers of course preparations, they feel on the whole that the number and variety of courses is an advantage of the quarter system.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 5, 6, 9, 10, 29.
Miscellaneous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

4. Should graduation requirements be changed?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

About 70% of all courses taken are taken in required areas.

The average college-bound student by the end of winter quarter of his senior year has approximately 6 credits in science, 6 in college-prep math, 2 in foreign languages, and 10 in social studies and language arts.

Most former students responding to a questionnaire said they were admitted to the college of their choice or were working at satisfactory jobs.

Most former students in college feel that they were adequately prepared. Just over half the former students working said that their courses had prepared them for their jobs.

About half the former students responding felt that graduation requirements should remain unchanged. Most of the rest thought they should be made harder.

About two thirds of AISD's students report wanting to attend some kind of college when they graduate. About 75% of the former students responding were in a college of some kind.

The average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores for the district are roughly 30 points above the national average. The scores have declined slightly over the past three years, paralleling the national decline.

By the end of twelfth grade AISD students are near the national average in all areas of achievement except writing that are measured by the standardized test administered by the district. There is a gradual rise in average score compared to nationwide norms from ninth through twelfth grade. In social studies there is a dramatic rise between tenth and eleventh grades.

The majority of teachers and other secondary faculty feel that AISD is doing an adequate job of preparing college-bound students. There is a lot more question about the preparation of non-college bound students.

Approximately one fifth of the total number of students in high school graduate each year.

Slightly under one tenth of the high school students in the district drop out each year.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 18.
Miscellaneous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

5. What level of financial support is needed for materials, inservice, course outlines, etc.?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Course outlines are generally seen as useful and relevant, needing few changes, although some cover an inappropriate amount of material and need revisions.

Teachers, principals, other school faculty and secondary coordinators all indicate materials as their highest priority for additional funding.

The lack of texts and materials for new courses is mentioned as a problem by principals, teachers and coordinators; parents also mentioned a lack of appropriate materials as a problem.

Course outlines were seen by teachers and principals as very valuable, but little priority was given to additional financial support. Few changes were seen as needed in the outlines for the coming year, and only a few new ones are in preparation.

Two principals indicated a need for inservice for their faculty in data processing, registration mechanics, or curriculum; however, four indicated that no additional inservice was needed and three indicated that they did not want any inservice for their staffs or that it was a distraction, especially when it pulled teachers from classes.

Most groups rank inservice below such things as materials and additional personnel in priority.

Other areas indicated as possibly needing additional financial support were additional personnel (especially data processing clerks and departmental aides); time off for department chairpersons, and support for registration procedures and data processing.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 24, 25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

6a. Does the quarter system require changes in minimum and maximum class size?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

During the spring over half of the teachers interviewed said they would be willing to teach larger sections in some courses in exchange for smaller sections in others. This was a substantial increase from those willing to do so in the fall.

About one fifth of the courses listed in the master schedule had enrollments under 20 students. (For some of these, one teacher was teaching several courses during the same period). Very few courses with an enrollment above 35 were listed.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 19.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendation will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

6b. Does the quarter system require changes in the role of the department chairpersons?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Since the implementation of the quarter system, the department chairperson role has involved more responsibility for advising, scheduling, course assignment, coordination of materials and equipment, coordination of various department activities and increasing responsibility as a link between administration and the teachers.

Both teachers and principals favor strongly the present method of assigning classes, which involves the department chairperson very heavily.

Most principals and coordinators indicate an off period as the most valuable assistance for the department chairpersons.

Many department chairpersons indicated that some of their responsibilities, such as accounting for and distributing books and materials, could be assigned to someone else.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 20.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

7. Should the district provide transportation from school to school to back up the expanded curriculum?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Seven percent (7%) of parents in the fall and 5% of parents in the spring said that their children could not take a course because it was offered only at another school and transportation was not available.

About two-thirds of students reported getting all the courses they wanted to take. The rest failed to get at least one course for a variety of different reasons.

Of the courses listed in the course guide, approximately one-third were listed on the survey forms of fewer than 5 high schools for the 1976-1977 school year.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 27.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

B. PROGRAM-LEVEL QUESTIONS

1. What changes should be made in course offerings in each department?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

AISD students are below the national norms in all subjects at the ninth grade. By twelfth grade they are nearly at the national norms in most subjects, but still well below them in writing.

Generally the opinion is that course offerings are adequate for preparing college-bound students and somewhat less adequate for preparing non-college-bound students.

The majority of students feel that the number of courses is just right in math, English, social studies, science and P.E. However, about a quarter feel that there are too few in social studies, science and P.E.; while about a quarter feel there are too many in English.

The majority of teachers in social studies and science felt that there should be more sequencing of their courses; the majority of teachers in other areas did not.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 1, 6.
Miscellaneous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

2. What changes should be made in the format of course outlines?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Most teachers felt that the course outlines were satisfactory and useful without needing changes. The area most often mentioned as needing to be changed from some outlines was the amount of material covered. The section used least was the suggested equipment and materials, but the majority of teachers reported using this section also.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 24.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

3. What changes need to be made in instructional methogology in each department?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Achievement scores for the district are below the national norms in all areas; they increase to near the national norms in all areas except writing. The weakest area in writing is capitalization and punctuation. In math computation is lower than basic concepts.

Students feel that the quality of teaching under the quarter system is about the same as it was under the semester system.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 1, 12.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

4. Does the pattern of prerequisites need to be modified in some areas to facilitate scheduling?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Teachers in social studies and science indicated that more sequencing was needed for courses in their areas, even if this meant that students had less choice about courses.

Some principals continue to list scheduling single sections and trailer courses (courses offered each quarter for those who failed the previous quarter) as a problem.

Principals and teachers listed scheduling as being less of a problem in the spring than in the fall.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 10, 29.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

5. Does the advising procedure need modifications? How?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Over a third of students indicated that they did not have enough information for choosing courses.

About half the teachers interviewed in the fall cited advising as a major problem of the quarter system; this had fallen to about one quarter in the spring.

Other faculty felt that changes in the advising procedure were definitely needed. Among changes mentioned were providing more training for advisors, coordinating more between counselors and advisors, and giving more of the responsibility for advising to teachers.

Principals indicated that the new course guide and new numbering system for courses were very helpful this spring.

Parents feel on the whole that their students are allowed to take the courses they want or need.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 13, 14, 15.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

6. Should course fairs be continued?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Most students and parents who have attended a course fair found them useful.

Principals reported mixed success with course fairs held in junior highs by senior high personnel.

Most secondary coordinators thought course fairs should be continued.

The majority of non-teaching secondary faculty thought course fairs were useful and should be continued, but the percent saying they should not be continued rose from fall to spring. Modifications suggested included getting course fairs better organized, involving teachers more, and stressing their importance to students more.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 16.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

7. Who should bear the primary responsibility for advising students? Homeroom teachers? Subject area teachers? Counselors? Parents?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Students felt that subject area teachers were the best sources of information.

Teachers felt that subject area teachers in fact provided the most information to students; they also felt that this was appropriate.

Other secondary faculty indicated subject area teachers as the most appropriate advisors by a majority in the spring, though not in the fall.

Counselors were the advisor choice of the largest number of parents in both fall and spring; however, the percent of parents choosing counselors in the spring declined, largely in favor of subject area teachers.

Nearly half the students questioned indicated that they did not have enough information for choosing courses.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 13.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the approprate administrative staff.

8. Should there be revisions in the placement tests?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Both the Orientation to Language Arts (OLA) test and the Science Proficiency Test (SPT) were found to give reasonably consistent scores.

A number of problems in the relative difficulty of subtests and in the comparability of the subtests were identified for the OLA test.

A few items on the SPT do not seem to relate very well to score on the whole test, but in general the items seem to be of reasonable difficulty and the test seems to be reasonably cohesive.

Students who passed the SPT in 1975 and their teachers both report that the students have done well in more advanced courses without the introductory course. The students make largely As and Bs.

Approximately 5% of the students taking the SPT reached the passing criterion.

The OLA test was replaced for the spring, 1976 administration.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation question 26.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

9. Should changes be made in the way teachers are assigned courses? If so, what changes?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Teachers reported being satisfied with the way courses are assigned.

Principals reported that the procedure for assigning courses worked well; the only problems indicated were the large number of different courses some teachers had to prepare for and the need to change some classes just before the quarter started because of changes in staffing or enrollments.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Miscellaneous findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

10. Should teachers be provided more training to handle added advising responsibility and revised and expanded courses?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

The majority of teachers and principals did not feel that teachers needed additional training, although some teachers felt that additional training for teaching specific courses would be useful.

Non-teaching faculty in the high schools felt that teachers carrying out advising needed training in graduation requirements, vocational and college guidance, and course content.

Students felt that teachers were their best source of information regarding courses to take.

Coordinators saw a need for instruction of teachers in new course content as the primary priority for training.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 21, 22.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be made by the appropriate administrative staff.

11. In what other ways should staff development programs be modified?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

Several principals expressed concern about teachers and other school personnel being pulled from the schools on regular work days for training and other activities.

Teachers expressed a desire to share ideas with other teachers of the same courses, and to be exposed to new teaching techniques and materials.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 21, 22.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be provided by the appropriate administrative staff.

12a. Should the schools improve communication with parents regarding the purpose of the quarter system and the progress of its implementation?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

In the fall less than half the parents questioned said they had enough information about the quarter system, and only a fourth said they had received most of their information from the schools. In the spring the number saying they had enough information was up to 66%, but fewer than one in five said they had received most of their information from the schools.

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 30, 31.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be provided by the appropriate administrative staff.

12b. Should the schools improve communication with parents regarding their own children's progress?

RELEVANT FINDINGS:

The majority of parents said they were not told enough about their child's progress.

When asked if their child's skills in math and English were adequate, during the fall a third of parents said they did not know for math skills; a fourth did not know for English skills. During the spring, about a fifth of parents said they did not know for both areas. (This was prior to the achievement testing in the spring).

EVALUATION FINDINGS REFERENCED:

Evaluation questions 30, 31.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This year recommendations will be provided by the appropriate administrative staff.

III

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The 1975-76 school year heralded a new approach to secondary education in the Austin Independent School District. A new quarter system was planned and implemented by the District to replace the traditional semester system plan. The quarter system was implemented in all secondary schools, both junior and senior high. The major focus of this discussion will be on high schools since the quarter system implementation at the junior high level mostly involved calendar changes while at the senior high level quarter system implementation has been much more extensive and innovative. Although this was the first year for the quarter system in Austin, the concept of quarter system plans is not new.

Frequently Used Quarter System Designs

The initial move away from the traditional school calendar began when educators became concerned about overcrowded school buildings not being utilized during the entire calendar year. Plans for quarter systems began with the idea that by utilizing school buildings on a twelve-month schedule, student vacations could be staggered throughout the year, preventing the need for construction of additional building facilities to handle larger enrollments. There are three basic extended year models which have been adopted or considered for adoption by various school districts throughout the country: the 45-15 plan, the four-quarter plan and the quinmester plan. Both the 45-15 plan and the four-quarter plan utilize school facilities year-round (240 class days); the student body is divided into four groups with only three groups utilizing the school building at any one time. In the 45-15 plan each group attends class for four nine-week sessions with each session followed by a 15-school-day vacation. In the four-quarter plan, 240 school days are divided into four quarters with each student group attending three of the four quarters. In the quinmester plan, 225 class days are divided into 45-day sessions; each of five groups of students attend classes for four of the five sessions. Vacations are staggered so that the school building is utilized by only four groups of students during any one 45-day session. These quarter system plans are illustrated in Figure III-1.

There are numerous variations on the three basic plans including one in which the school operates all year and students may enroll at any time as long as length of attendance conforms to state requirements. As of the 1973-74 school year, 124 schools in 24 states were operating on some form of quarter system and many other districts were piloting quarter system programs during the 1974-75 school year. Various school districts throughout the country have performed feasibility studies. These studies reveal that year-round operation offers a variety of educational objectives such as alleviation of overcrowded conditions, shorter terms to provide both variety of subject matter and more in-depth coverage of various subjects. A school district may choose from among a number of objectives and tailor its

THE MOST PROMINENT QUARTER SYSTEM PLANS

KEY: ⌂ = 15 Days in School ☀ = 15 Days on Vacation

45-15 Plan (240-day school year, 180 days per pupil)

Group 1	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀
Group 2	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂
Group 3	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂
Group 4	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂	⌂	⌂	☀	⌂

Four-Quarter Plan (240-day school year, 180 days per pupil)

Group 1	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀ ☀
Group 2	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂
Group 3	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂
Group 4	☀ ☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂ ⌂

Quinmester Plan (225-day school year, 180 days per pupil)

Group 1	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀
Group 2	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂
Group 3	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂
Group 4	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂
Group 5	☀ ☀ ☀	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂	⌂ ⌂ ⌂

Figure III-1: THE MOST PROMINENT QUARTER SYSTEM PLANS.

school calendar to complement its objectives. For example, if alleviation of crowded conditions is a prime objective, a district might choose a year-round school calendar.

Although initial adoptions of quarter system or extended year programs began with economic motivations and the desire to more fully utilize existing facilities, many educators have begun to stress the educational benefits to students of extended year programs. Some of the potential benefits that have been put forth are indicated in the following quote:

> "School districts that switch to an extended year often redesign their curriculum to fit the new schedule. This usually means developing more and shorter courses than are called for by the traditional school calendar. Students are thus presented with a greater variety of courses from which to choose. One high school that helped pioneer the extended school year nearly tripled the number of courses it offered after making the switch.
>
> Students are better able to grasp the goals of shorter courses, thus teachers find it easier to maintain their interest.
>
> Students can't fall as far behind in a short course as they do under the semester system. If a student does flunk, he's set back only a few weeks instead of half a year or more...
>
> Teachers have an opportunity to make more money. Under many plans they have the choice of a standard nine-month contract or an extended contract with a one-third increase in pay. There is a potential for saving money in the long run..."
>
> (The Kiplinger Magazine, 1974)

The Quarter System in Texas

The school calendar in Texas, as in other states, was originally established to conform to the needs of an agrarian economy (Blanton, 1971). School children were needed at home during the summer months to help with crops. With the changing needs of society, the increased enrollment in schools and the cost of providing new school buildings, alternative school calendars have been proposed for adoption in Texas. A special legislative committee of the Texas Legislature studied the advantages and disadvantages of adopting an extended school year plan in Texas. It was decided that the major disadvantages could be solved by allowing flexibility for each school district in the state to adopt quarter system plans consistent with district needs. The committee also found that extended year programs offered the possibility of saving tax dollars while offering students more educational advantages and more parttime job opportunities. It was found that many businesses and industries need parttime help throughout the year but can find help only during summer months when the job market is flooded with students who must compete for employment. The Committee conducted hearings in various cities across the state and in 1971 the 62nd session of the Texas Legislature passed legislation calling for implementation of the quarter system in Texas schools. This legislation does not require school districts to operate on a year-round basis but does require that a school must operate at least three quarters and provide 180 days of instruction for all students. Four quarters or year-round operation is optional according to the individual needs of each school district. A copy of House Bill number 1078 relating to operation of the quarter system in Texas schools may be seen in A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON QUARTER SYSTEM PLANS, 1975-76 (Matuszek, et al., 1975).

Reasons for adoption of the quarter system in Texas appear in a Texas Education Agency (TEA) publication (1972) which states that the quarter system and year-round school plans provide "...a means to incorporate new and viable alternatives in schooling. An increasing involvement of students in developing their plan of study is possible because of the flexibility and broadened opportunities. The particular quarter system plan chosen by a local district will depend greatly on the needs of the community. By incorporating the advantages and working out the specific problems, a school system can grow and expand to include all educational aspects of its community and increase mutually beneficial relationships."

In addition, the legislated change to a quarter system in Texas schools was initiated to (1) allow "...more efficient and economical use of school facilities and staff..." and/or (2) promote "...improvement of educational programs for students..." Various guidelines for use of the quarter system in Texas have been dispensed by TEA. One such publication, "Guides for Curriculum Planning for the Quarter System," (1973), presents a rationale for use of the quarter system. Acording to this document, the main advantages to be gained from change to a quarter system are presentation of greater variety of instruction with more experimental, remedial, advanced and intensive course afferings. In addition, the new curriculum gives to each school district the flexibility to tailor its educational program to its students and community. Some examples of how various school districts in Texas have interpreted the mandated implementation of a quarter system follow.

The Quarter System and the Secondary Program in AISD

The AISD secondary program contains 11 junior high schools (grades 7 and 8) and nine high schools (grades 9-12). The evaluation of AISD's quarter system has been conducted primarily at the high school level. Therefore only brief mention of junior high characteristics will be made.

Differences in School Characteristics: There is a wide range in size of AISD's secondary schools. At the junior high level there are approximately 10,500 students. The largest junior high has approximately 1300 students; the smallest, approximately 700. The others are fairly evenly distributed between these two. At the high school level the largest school has approximately 3100 students; the smallest, approximately 1350. Other schools have enrollments of approximately 2450, 2250, 1925, 1800, 1725, 1650 and 1400.

Physical facilities of Austin's high schools also vary somewhat. In addition to self-contained facilities, four of the high schools have large open-class areas where the concepts of open-class teaching are practiced in varying degrees. Physical sizes of high schools also vary with some schools suffering from overcrowding and some having enrollments too small to offer as extensive a curriculum as the larger schools.

Another area of variance is in the industrial arts program at the different schools. In fact, one high school, of the nine Austin schools, is considered "the" industrial arts center and many students commute to this school for training in various industrial arts.

There is a limited amount of busing, but the ethnic make-up of the high schools varies from almost total minority enrollment to almost total Anglo enrollment. To a large extent, school populations are uniform in socio-economic status and ethnicity because high schools are located within neighborhoods whose populations are relatively homogeneous.

Pupil/teacher ratio varies very little from school to school. The number of teachers at each school varies from 150 at the largest school to 80 at the smallest. However, the average pupil/teacher ratio for Austin's high school is approximately 19 to 1. The smallest pupil/teacher ratio found for an individual school was 16 to 1; the largest was 22 to 1. This average does not indicate actual class size because the number of teachers counted for averaging at each school included librarians, resource teachers and others who do not have regular classes. Class size is also affected by the fact that most teachers teach only five periods a day, while many students take classes for six.

Due to the rapid growth in recent years of Austin's population, there are a number of new high schools. There are no very old high school buildings in use in Austin; the oldest were built in the early 1950's, and three of the nine high schools were built and opened since 1970. Building and educational concepts, however, have changed considerably since the older buildings of the 1950's were constructed. Therefore, there are some very real differences in physical facilities such as open-classrooms, more extensive facilities for fine arts programs and industrial arts programs (larger band halls, little theatres, well-equipped art rooms, etc.). In addition, one of Austin's newest schools was built with a totally new architectural concept which is designed to facilitate recent innovative educational concepts for large urban schools.

Budget for All Secondary Schools in Austin: During the first year of quarter system operation (1975-76) the total district budget was approximately $66 million, a per pupil expenditure of approximately $1250. Approximately half of this money came from state funds; the rest was local--primarily from property taxes. The tax rate for 1975-76 was $1.72/$100 assessed valuation. Of this amount, approximately $22 million was budgeted for the secondary schools: approximately $20 million for school personnel, including teachers and principals; approximately $1.5 million for funds spent through the central administration (including $500,000 available for materials, etc), and approximately $500,000 for career education, which is focused largely at the secondary level.

The Quarter System in Austin

The quarter system, as it has been implemented in Austin, is more a trimester plan than a "true" quarter or extended year plan. Three full terms of instruction are provided with an optional summer quarter for which tuition must be paid. At the secondary level, the new quarter system plan includes more modifications at the high school level than at the junior high level. The major change at the junior high level has been in the school year calendar with the new quarter calendar based on a trimester plan. The school year for junior high has simply been divided into three 12-week quarter terms rather than two 18-week semester terms. This trimester calendar has also been adopted at the high school level; however, the entire high school curriculum has undergone extensive renovation. Thus, **having** an extended or year-round program was not the prime objective of Austin's secondary schools. Nevertheless, numerous educational advantages are expected to accrue to students such as:

1. a more flexible curriculum with a greater range of choice for students;
2. more individualized plans of study;
3. a revised and updated curriculum which can present more experimental, remedial, advanced and intensive course offerings;
4. increased involvement of students in developing their own plan of study;
5. concentration of courses into shorter terms lessening time required for remedial or make-up work;
6. more frequent student evaluations (e.g., grade reports each 6 or 12 weeks rather than 9 or 18);
7. shorter courses to maintain student interest at a high level; and
8. decreased emphasis on grade levels since many courses can be taken regardless of age or grade level.

Implementation of the quarter system in the Austin Independent School District actually began in November 1972. A Secondary Study Committee was appointed by the District to explore the quarter system for its usefulness in individualizing education in Austin's schools. The study continued into 1973 with a proposed implementation target date of Fall 1973. It was found that four requirements had to be satisfied before implementation of the quarter system could occur. These requirements were:

1. curriculum revision;
2. a scheduling system;
3. data processing support; and
4. materials/equipment for new courses.

Mandatory implementation of the quarter system was extended by the Texas Legislature to the 1975-76 school year. According to the requirements of the legislation, the Austin Independent School District is implementing the quarter system during 1975-76 by dividing the school calendar into three periods of three months each with an optional fourth period in the summer. Students may attend the fourth or summer quarter if desired. This "extra" term offers students an opportunity for remediation, enrichment or acceleration toward early graduation (a four year high school program could be completed in less than four years by attending all four quarter periods for three years). However, funds are not supplied by the state for attendance during four quarters in one year. These funds must come from either tuition or district funding. The Austin quarter system plan is illustrated in Figure III-2.

Additional impetus for the revitalization of the semester system curricula stems from the "back to basics" approach to education. In major academic areas such a math, language arts, social studies and science, curricula have undergone extensive planning and redesign to include numerous basic skills course offerings such as: fundamentals of math; orientation to language arts; more numerous courses designed to improve reading skills, including courses in speed reading; and courses designed to improve student knowledge of the sciences such as introduction to science and cell biology.

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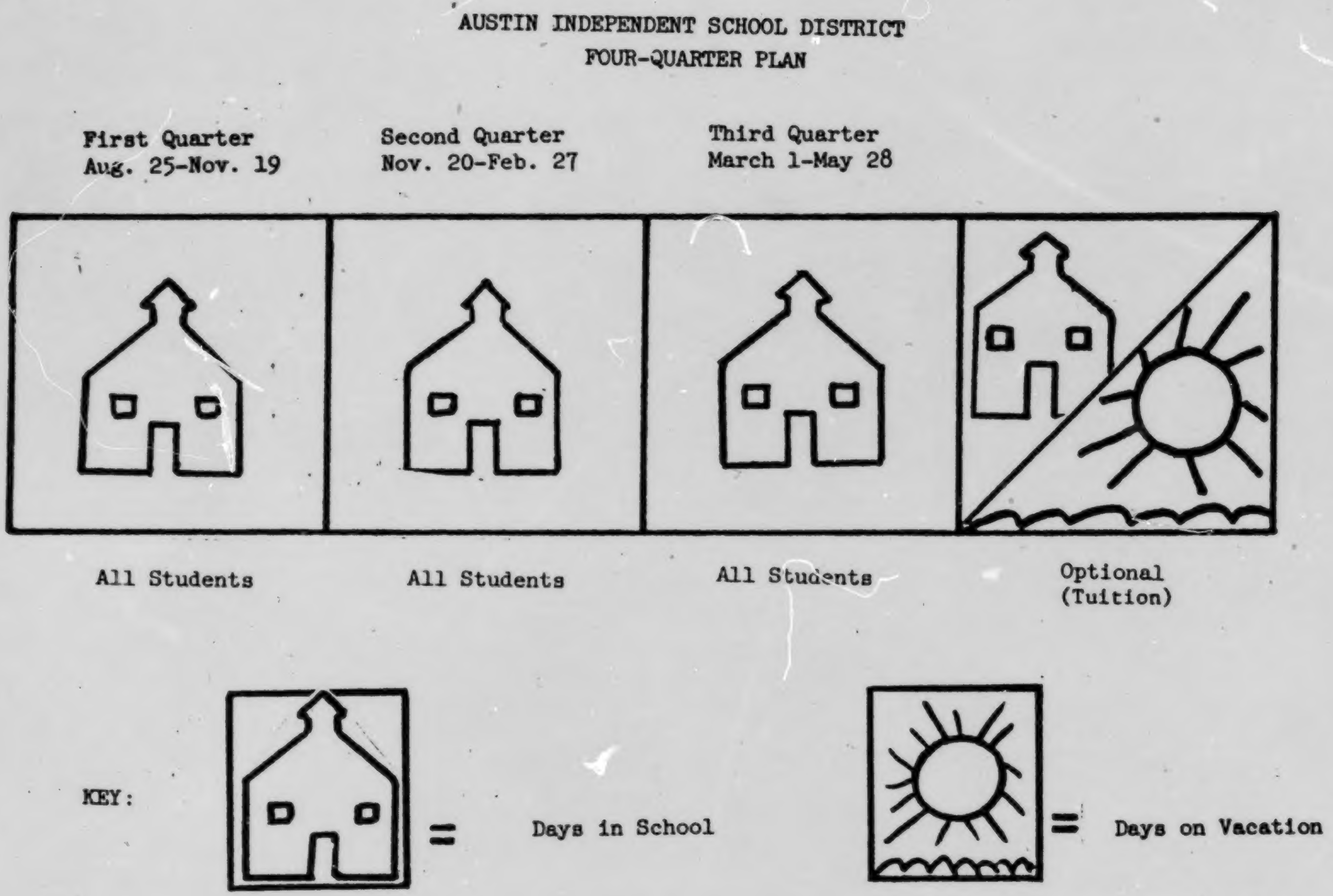
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOUR-QUARTER PLAN
First Quarter
Aug. 25-Nov. 19
Second Quarter
Nov. 20-Feb. 27
Third Quarter
March 1-May 28
All Students
All Students
All Students
Optional
(Tuition)
KEY:
= Days in School
= Days on Vacation

Figure III-2: AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUR-QUARTER PLAN.

B. CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

This final report presents a review of an objective evaluation of Austin's quarter system implementation. As with any objective evaluation, the goals and philosophy of the new program have necessarily been reduced to strictly measurable and quantifiable objectives, such as student achievement test scores, etc. In so doing, many environmental factors which constitute the "context" into which the program has been placed cannot be systematically evaluated. A representation of a typical environment which affects school programs may be seen in Figure III-3. It seems appropriate to consider some environmental factors which may have affected the quarter system during its first year of implementation. Among these have been resistance to change, and the political, social, economic, administrative and communication environments of the community.

These are limited mechanisms for internal change, renewal or innovation within the American educational system (Ianni and McNeill, 1968). This is perhaps a factor which has affected implementation of the quarter system. With any new innovation there are many complex issues involved in the transfer of an educational concept to actual practice. In a discussion of technological forecasting, Bright (1972) states that the process of translating technological innovation into physical reality includes "...the act of invention...initiation of the...idea, acquisition of necessary knowledge, its transfer into usable hardware or procedures, its introduction into society, and its diffusion and adoption to the point where its impact is significant." These aspects of adopting new innovations are certainly present in the implementation of an educational program. In addition, the environment into which an educational innovation is placed is often itself one which is very complex. Implementation of the quarter system program might be referred to as "a complex educational innovation" (Hall, 1974) which has been placed into an already complex environment. This environment is illustrated in Figure III-3.

In addition, implementation of a new school program involves many demands on those persons responsible for the program such as teachers, administrators, principals, students and others. Full implementation can occur only after all persons involved have proceeded through various levels of awareness, acceptance and competence. Charters and Jones (1973) have outlined four stages through which an innovation progresses.

- Level 1 - Institutional Commitment
- Level 2 - Structural Context (changes in formal and physical conditions)
- Level 3 - Role Performance (staff perspective-changes in actual teaching performance)
- Level 4 - Learning Activities (student perspective)

Further levels of implementation have been amplified in work done at

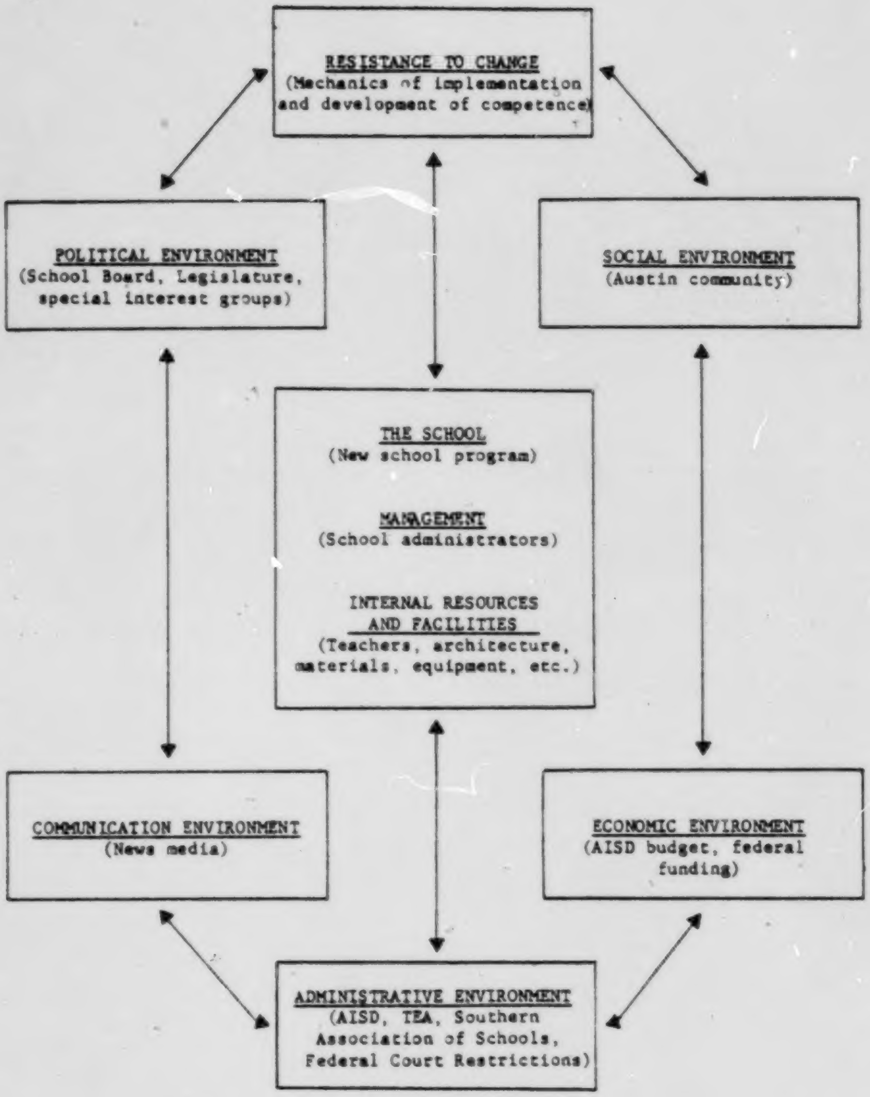
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE
(Mechanics of implementation and development of competence)
POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT
(School Board, Legislature, special interest groups)
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
(Austin community)
THE SCHOOL
(New school program)
MANAGEMENT
(School administrators)
INTERNAL RESOURCES AND FACILITIES
(Teachers, architecture, materials, equipment, etc.)
COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT
(News media)
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT
(AISD budget, federal funding)
ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT
(AISD, TEA, Southern Association of Schools, Federal Court Restrictions)

Figure III-3: TYPICAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECTING SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

The University of Texas by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. This work relates to the theory that different types of concerns are expressed by people involved in innovation which are related directly to the stages through which the innovation must progress (see Figure III-4). Progression through these levels involves time and the acquisition of knowledge and experience in the use of new methods and materials.

For the quarter system program, progression through levels of acceptance is particularly complex in view of the fact that schools are attempting implementation of more than one innovation. Austin's quarter system contains both a new calendar and a new curriculum. In concept, a new curriculum and a new school calendar seem to be only two separate innovations. However, each involves many facets, such as modifications in teaching strategies and acquainting members of the school district with numerous new policies of implementation. Each facet of the new system constitutes an innovation and each must proceed separately through levels of innovation such as those shown in Figure III-4). For example, with introduction of the new calendar, teachers must adjust the amount of material to be covered in each new quarter course. New inservice sessions must be planned to acquaint members of the school district with policies and changes in regular routines such as scheduling and registration procedures. Adjustments are also needed in budgeting, and since Austin's new curriculum is much more comprehensive than it has been in the past, provisions must be made for the acquisition of new materials complementary to the program.

Schools adopting new programs must cope with other elements existing within an already structured environment (see Figure III-3). The political environment has certainly had an effect upon implementation of Austin's quarter system. First, change to the quarter system was mandated by the state legislature. Thus, while it may or may not have desired a quarter system plan, AISD was not given this choice. Second, time lines for quarter system implementation were set by the legislature. The planning of a new program as extensive as Austin's could have been affected by such time constraints.

The political environment of AISD also includes a school board which may impose constraints on implementation because of its need to comply with federal and state legislation. The administrators of new school programs must also work closely with the school board in order to reconcile the needs of various groups within the community.

Community needs are of prime importance to the implementation of Austin's quarter system. Austin, the site of the state capital and the state's largest university, has a particularly complex social environment. The very heterogeneity of Austin's social environment places a responsibility on schools to reconcile differing community needs and desires. The ethnic makeup of Austin also contributes to the need for very comprehensive educational programs; implementation of the quarter system required cognizance of this fact.

One requirement of public education which seems to be echoing from increasingly large segments of the Austin community is for more emphasis on

Stage of Concern	Expressions of Concern
Unaware	I don't know anything about it (the innovation).
Awareness	I have heard about the innovation, but I don't know much about it.
Exploration	How much of my time would use of this innovation take?
Early Trial	I seem to be spending all my time in getting material ready for students.
Limited Impact	I can now see how this innovation relates to other things I am doing.
Maximum Benefit	I am concerned about relating the effects of this innovation with what other instructors are doing.
Renewal	I am trying a variation in my use of the innovation that looks like it is going to result in even greater effects.

This table has been taken from the following paper with the author's permission: Gene Hall. The concerns-based adoption model: A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Annual Meeting (Chicago: April, 1974).

Figure III-4: STAGES OF CONCERN AND TYPICAL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT AN INNOVATION.

basic skills for students. Regardless of community diversity, there is apparently a gap between public expectations and realization of these expectations by public school students (Graham, 1974). As a corollary, one request issuing from the Austin community is a plea for a "back-to basics" curriculum. This plea has had a very definite effect on Austin's quarter system evolution, as the developers of the new curriculum would be likely to attest.

The public has also made known to the AISD the feeling that many students are not being reached by the system on an individual level. Because of this public sentiment, the desire to make the system more responsive to individuals was a guiding influence when designing the new calendar and the new curriculum. The variety of new courses, including many which provide intensive training in basic skills, should theoretically satisfy individual needs. The paradox here is that offering students more individualized courses requires the students themselves to exercise much more responsibility in choosing courses complementary to specific educational needs than was exercised under the semester system. Thus, Austin's schools, in adopting a more flexible curriculum, must wrestle with locus of responsibility. Opinions are divided on whether this responsibility should rest with parents, schools or students.

One portion of the communication environment is the Austin news media which may exert either a positive or a negative effect. This was vividly illustrated in the attitudinal information collected for the quarter system evaluation. Parents of AISD students were given questionnaires asking for their opinions of Austin's new quarter system. Answers to these questionnaires varied considerably according to the proximity of their return to press coverage of Austin's schools. Those questionnaires returned after a series of articles about the schools published during the fall tended to be more negative than those returned when there was little press coverage.

Very definite constraints are placed on new program implementation by the economic environment. Obviously, the developers of Austin's quarter system were compelled to consider the AISD, individual taxpayers, and federal budgets when implementing the new quarter system. Funds for the acquisition of new materials and support personnel needed to supplement the new program could not exceed available resources.

Finally, the administrative environment requires the implementation of a curriculum and calendar which satisfies the educational requirements of the Texas Education Agency, the federal courts, and the Southern Association of Schools. All curriculum changes must be approved by TEA and major interschool shifts of students of differing SES must be cleared with the federal courts.

In summary, there are many factors which affect implementation of new programs. Some are amenable to measurement and these have been the main subject of this final report. It is hoped that awareness of the environmental factors not amenable to measurement can, however, prove useful in providing insight for interpreting the results of this year's quarter system evaluation.

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C. EVALUATION DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The possibility of evaluating the quarter system first came to the attention of the Office of Research and Evaluation during 1973-74 as a result of feedback from various district administrators regarding programs they felt most needed evaluation. The quarter system was high on the list of programs which were indicated as requiring assessment. Thus it seemed likely that the Office of Research and Evaluation would indeed be asked to conduct an evaluation of the quarter system.

Having decided that an evaluation of the quarter system would have high priority for the following year, the Office of Research and Evaluation began activities to design such an evaluation. During the spring, relatively little time was available to spend on this task; however, several steps were carried out. A review of other district evaluations was undertaken in order to gain insight into the problems likely to occur in implementing our quarter system. In addition, meetings were held with the senior high principals and secondary coordinators to elicit possible decisions which would need to be made regarding the quarter system. These decisions were summarized and preliminary decision questions were prepared. Finally, an estimated budget for carrying out a major evaluation of the quarter system was prepared and submitted to the district as part of the complete budget for the Office of Research and Evaluation.

The next step taken was to review the decision questions formulated during the spring and prepare a list of possible data sources which might be of assistance in making the decisions. This involved investigating what data were already available in the school system and considering what other kinds of useful data could be collected. When the tentative list of decision questions and possible sources of data had been prepared, a series of interviews was held with available secondary personnel. This included the Director and Assistant Directors of Secondary Education and several of the secondary coordinators. Since it was summer principals were not included at that time. The purpose of these meetings was to expand and clarify the decision questions, and discuss which data sources might be most useful to the secondary staff in reaching conclusions regarding each question.

Through the cooperation of two secondary coordinators, a questionnaire was also administered to a group of teachers to establish both their priorities for the evaluation questions and to ascertain which data they thought most relevant to each question. At the end of these reviews a preliminary design, consisting of tentative evaluation questions and methods for collecting data on these questions, was prepared. The preliminary design was reviewed with the AISD Board of Trustees and with several secondary administrators. At this stage the quarter system evaluation budget was approved, and the scope of the evaluation was established. A complete draft design was then produced, which included decision questions, evaluation questions, overview of data collection and analysis, and a list of instruments with collection times. This draft was reviewed by the secondary central office administrators, the senior high school principals, the secondary coordinators, the Evaluation Advisory Committee and various other persons.

Finally, based on the input from various groups and the results of preliminary cost investigations, a final design was produced. This design reflected the same basic structure as the original design; it had, however, been modified in a number of ways. For instance, a review of past studies of students who had graduated suggested that a great deal of effort was involved in collecting relatively little information. Thus, it was decided to conduct only a pilot study of former graduates this year, while making contacts to prepare current students to respond to questionnaires after graduation. On the other hand, the perceived importance of teacher input was so great that a questionnaire to be given to all teachers during staff development time was added to the sample of teacher interviews originally planned.

The final design was again reviewed by the Director and Assistant Directors of Secondary Education and by the senior high principals. It was then prepared for final distribution and reviewed by the Cabinet.

The final design which grew out of this process is really far more than an evaluation of "the quarter system" alone. Although some evaluation questions do deal with the shorter terms and other aspects of the new calendar, many more focus on the new curriculum implemented at the same time. Furthermore, it proved to be impossible to separate these two aspects of the senior highs from all of the other facets of education in AISD. Thus the final design reflects information about many different aspects of the secondary schools; it might better be called an evaluation of the secondary curriculum, calendar and other characteristics.

Quarter System Evaluation Staff and Budget

The final budget approved for the quarter system evaluation was approximately $70,000. This included salaries for a senior evaluator, two process evaluators, a data specialist and a secretary. It also included money for data processing, reproduction, and other costs. In addition, the evaluation received substantial support from the systemwide evaluation component and from data services.

Narrative Summary of the Evaluation

The quarter system evaluation had two primary foci for the first year. Information was gathered on how well the implementation of the quarter system has proceeded and on where problems have occurred or changes are needed. In addition, data were gathered which will provide a baseline for future examination of the effects of the quarter system.

Information regarding the quarter system was gathered in seven general areas:

Curriculum: Included which courses need modifications, how the course guides can be improved, the attitudes of various groups toward the new curriculum, etc.

The advising process: Included who carries out the advising, whether students are adequately advised, what changes are needed in placement tests, whether the course fairs should be continued, etc.

Graduation requirements: Included how many students are meeting Austin Independent School District requirements but are not prepared for their future plans and how former students, teachers and others feel about student preparation.

Organization patterns etc.: Included how courses are assigned, and whether the quarter system is putting too heavy a burden on some staff members.

Staff development: Included an examination of what competencies are required by the quarter system changes, what inservice has been offered, and what inservice might be needed in the future.

Communications and relations with parents: Included parent perception of the quarter system and its effect, how much information about the quarter system parents feel they have and what areas parents feel they would like more information about.

Year-round school: Included how feasible it would be in Austin, how various groups feel about it, and what changes would be needed to implement it.

Summary of Data Gathered for the Evaluation

Students:

1. Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes: Administered to sample of all high school students in March.
2. Student Questionnaire: Administered to a random sample of 5% of students. October and March.
3. Student Achievement Tests: Administered to all high school students in the areas of science, social studies, language arts, and math. April.

Teachers:

1. Interviews administered to a random sample of 10% of teachers. Teachers were interviewed during conference periods in October and April.

2. Teacher ratings: Administered to those teachers whose students are involved in validations of the placement and achievement tests. Teachers were asked to rate appropriateness of class placement of students. Administered by mail in winter quarter.

Principals:

1. Interviews administered by the senior evaluator in fall and spring.

Department Chairpersons:

1. Questionnaire mailed to the schools to be completed and returned through school mail in January.

Other Secondary Faculty:

1. Questionnaire administered to all assistant principals, deans, counselors registrars, librarians, etc. In meetings and through mailings to their school in fall and spring.

Other School Records:

1. Data from several kinds of records was gathered, including graduation records, credits earned, student grades, course request data and addresses of former students. Gathered by staff of ORE.

Former Students:

1. Questionnaire sent to a sample of 5% of students from the previous year and returned by mail in February.

Parents:

1. Questionnaire administered to a 5% sample of parents with students in AISD high schools. Sent and returned through the mail in October and March.
2. Interviews administered to their parents by students in participating psychology and sociology classes in winter quarter.

Coordinators:

1. Interviews administered to all secondary coordinators in their offices in October and May.

Other Records:

1. Data were obtained from a number of other sources who collect it. These include: attendance data, enrollment data; discipline data; dropout data; College Board scores.

   These data were analysed to provide baseline data and in many cases fall to spring comparisons for the quarter system evaluation.

IV

EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. **What is the level of student competency in math, reading, writing, science and social studies?**

ANSWER: **Average to below average in reading, science, social studies and math. Below average in writing.**

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Sequential Tests of Educational Progress

As can be seen in Figure IV-1 below, the average score in all areas for ninth grade is below the national average. For most areas the district average improves relative to the national average from ninth grade to twelfth grade. Since each grade is being compared to typical students from that grade across the nation, this increase is not necessarily to be expected. In other words, in many areas our students are behind when they begin high school, but by the end of twelfth grade they are approaching the national norms. This is especially true in social studies and math, but to some extent it is true in all areas.

There are wide discrepancies by area on the test, as can be seen in Figure IV-2. On the whole, the district is strongest in math; in math basic concepts AISD's average is close to the national average. The weakest areas are in writing, especially in capitalization and punctuation and in English expression. Even though students show improvement from ninth through twelfth grades in these areas, they remain more than ten percentile points below the national average at twelfth grade. This may be due at least in part to the relatively large bilingual population in Austin--the ethnic breakdown of the STEP norms is not available, so this cannot be verified. It does suggest that AISD has more problems in some areas than in others compared to schools across the nation.

In contrast to the average for the district, the third quartile scores are fairly close to the national average in all areas except English. These are the percentiles reached by the top 25% of the students in the district. In other words, the best quarter of the students in the district do about as well as the best quarter of students nationwide. The discrepancies by grade and area are also noted here; in ninth grade all scores are below the national level, whereas by twelfth grade all except English are approximately at the national level.

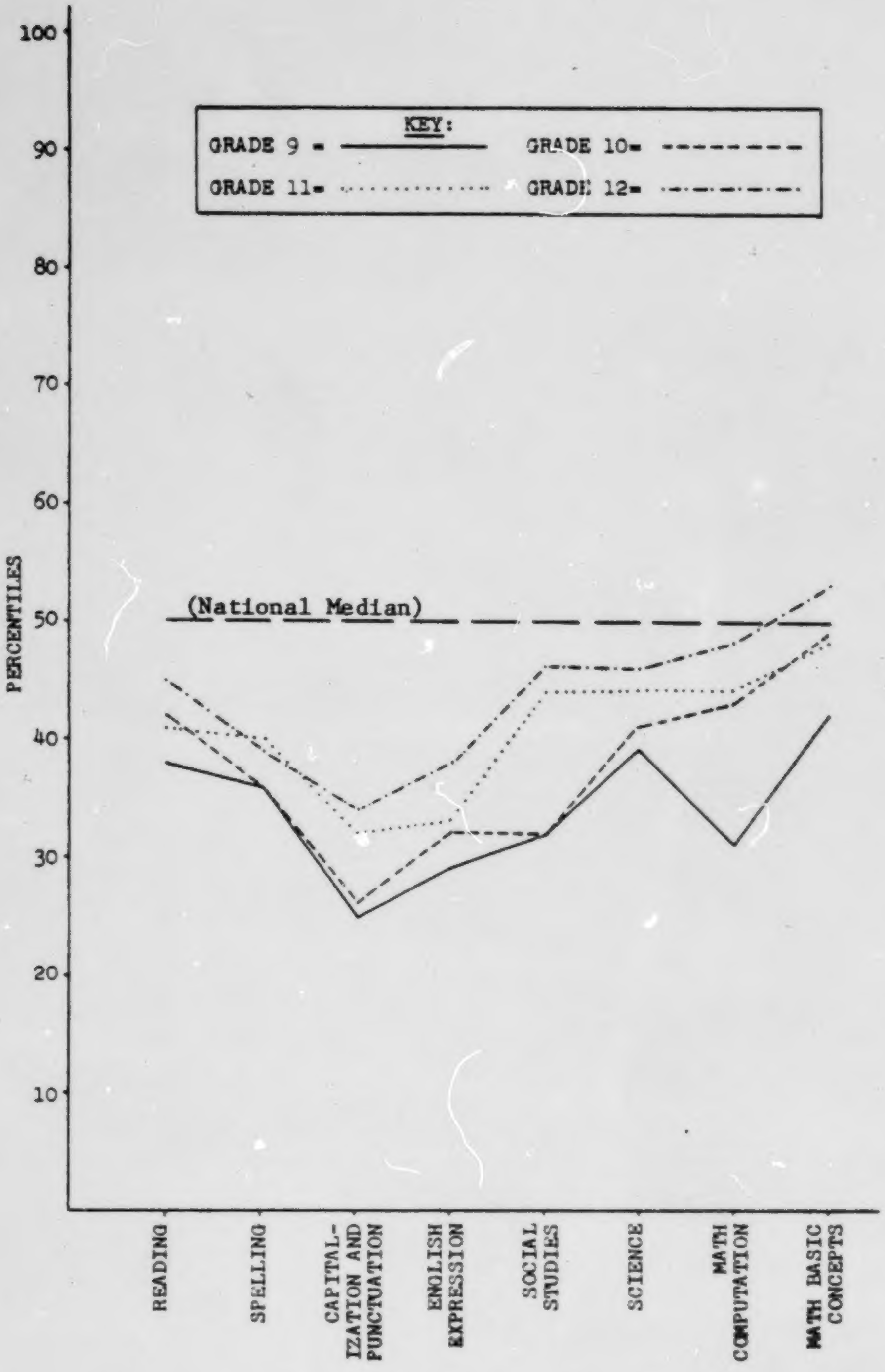


Figure IV-1: SEQUENTIAL TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, DISTRICT MEDIANS BY GRADE. Medians for all subtests of the STEP, graphed by grade. The national average is at the 50th percentile. These scores are for students in regular classes only; they are in some cases higher than the district-wide profiles, which also include students in special education classes.

The discrepancies by grade and area are also still visible. In English even our best quarter of student are well below the best quarter of the nation's students, whereas in math they are equal or above. The third quartiles are illustrated in Figure IV-3.

The first quartile scores for the district are illustrated in Figure IV-4. These scores are well below the national levels for all areas except math basic concepts. This suggests that, while the top 25% of AISD's students are comparable to national norms in most areas, the lowest 25% are lower in all areas except some math. This is consistent with previous ORE findings in achievement, which suggest that we have a larger number of students at low levels of achievement than the norm group.

The district average and quartiles for all areas are summarized in Table IV-1.

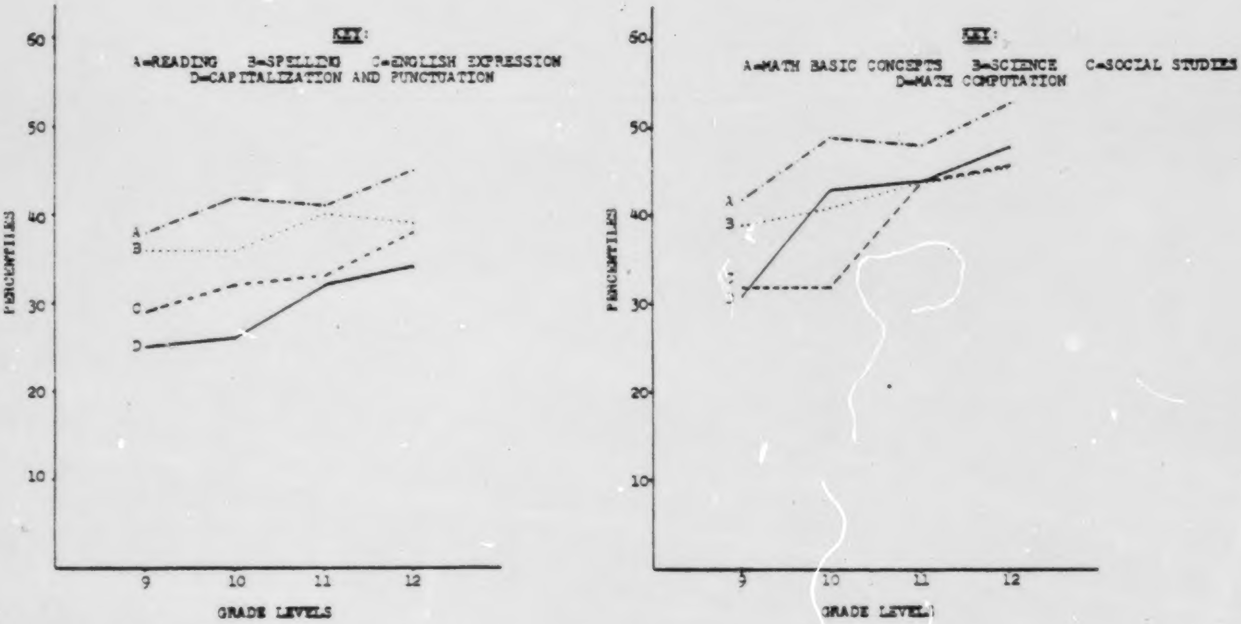


Figure IV-2: SEQUENTIAL TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, DISTRICT MEDIANS BY AREA. Medians for all grades taking the STEP, graphed by subtest. The national average is at the 50th percentile. These scores are for students in regular classes only; they are in some cases higher than the district-wide profiles, which also include students in special education classes.

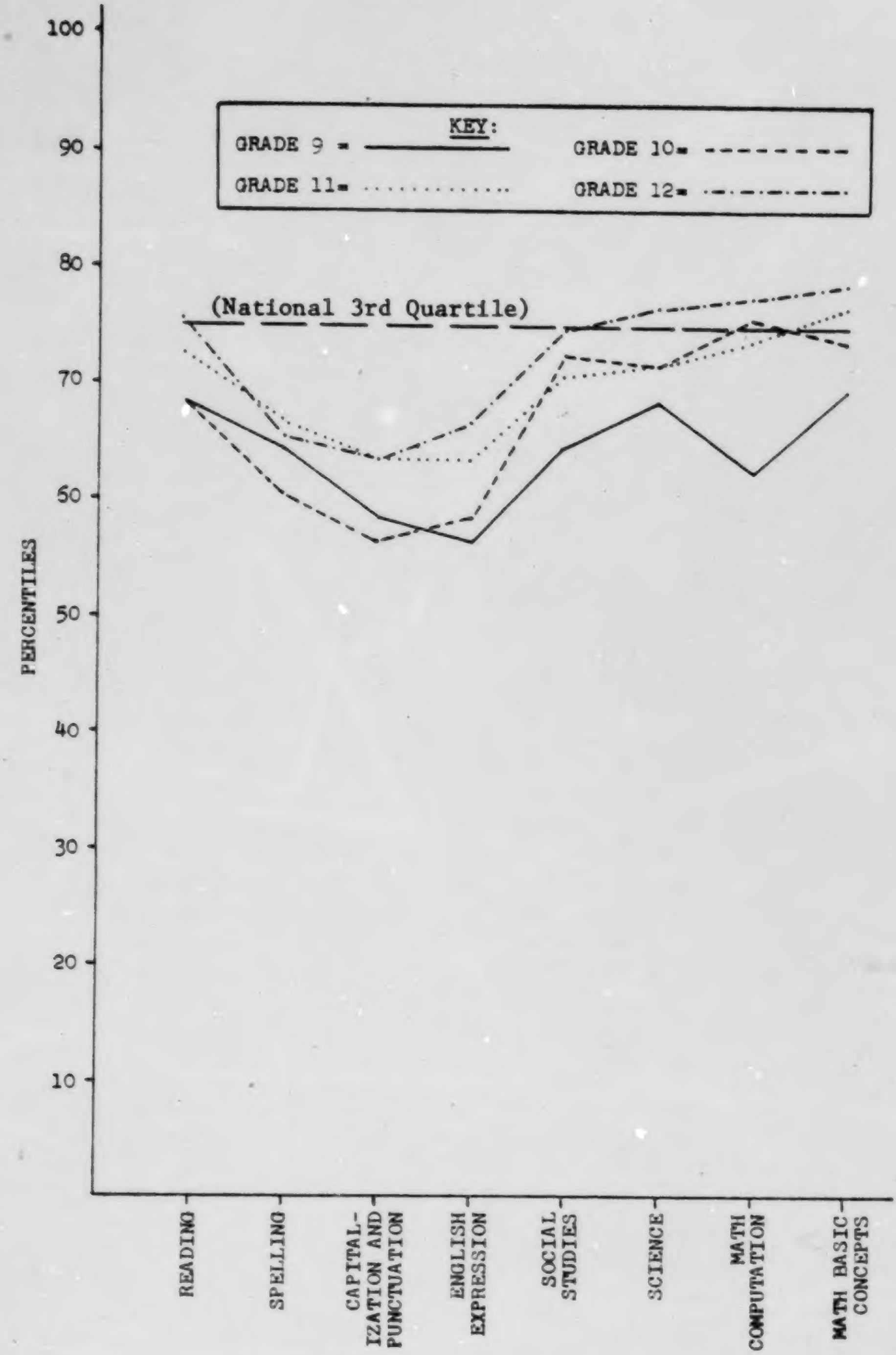


Figure IV-3: SEQUENTIAL TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, DISTRICT THIRD QUARTILES BY GRADE. Third quartile scores for all subtests of the STEP, graphed by grade. The national third quartile is at the 75th percentile. These scores are for students in regular classes only; they may be in some cases higher than the district-wide profiles, which also include students in special education classes.

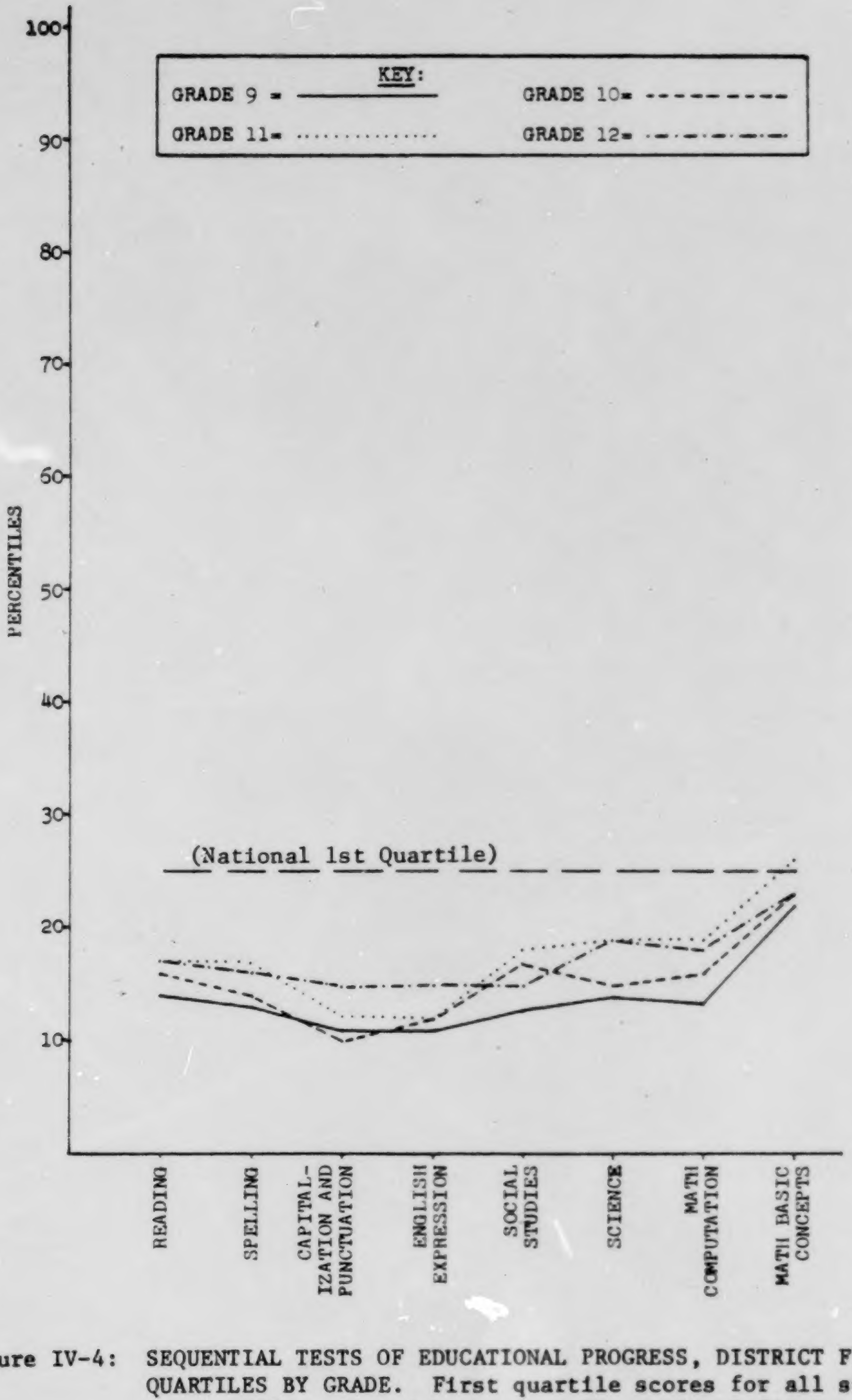


Figure IV-4: SEQUENTIAL TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, DISTRICT FIRST QUARTILES BY GRADE. First quartile scores for all subtests of the STEP, graphed by grade. The national first quartile is at the 25th percentile. These scores are for students in regular classes only; they are in some cases higher than the district-wide profiles, which also include students in special education classes.

Table IV-1: SEQUENTIAL TESTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, DISTRICT SUMMARY. Summary of medians, first quartiles and third quartiles in all subtests of the STEP for each grade taking the tests. These scores are based on students in regular classes only; they may be in some cases higher than the district-wide profiles, which also include students in special education classes.

SCHOOL	GRADE	SCORES	SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION							
			Reading	Spelling	Capitalization & Punctuation	English Expression	Social Studies	Science	Math Computation	Math Basic Concepts
District Wide Totals	9th	1st quartile	14	13	11	11	13	14	13	22
		Median	38	36	25	29	32	39	31	42
		3rd quartile	68	64	58	56	64	68	62	69
	10th	1st quartile	16	14	10	12	17	15	16	23
		Median	42	36	26	32	32	41	43	49
		3rd quartile	68	60	56	58	72	71	75	73
	11th	1st quartile	17	17	12	12	18	19	19	26
		Median	41	40	32	33	44	44	44	48
		3rd quartile	72	66	63	63	70	71	73	76
	12th	1st quartile	17	16	15	15	15	19	18	23
		Median	45	39	34	38	46	46	48	53
		3rd quartile	75	65	63	66	74	76	77	78

Scores given are percentiles.

2a. How many students graduate from high school?

ANSWER: Approximately 20% of the student body graduates each year.

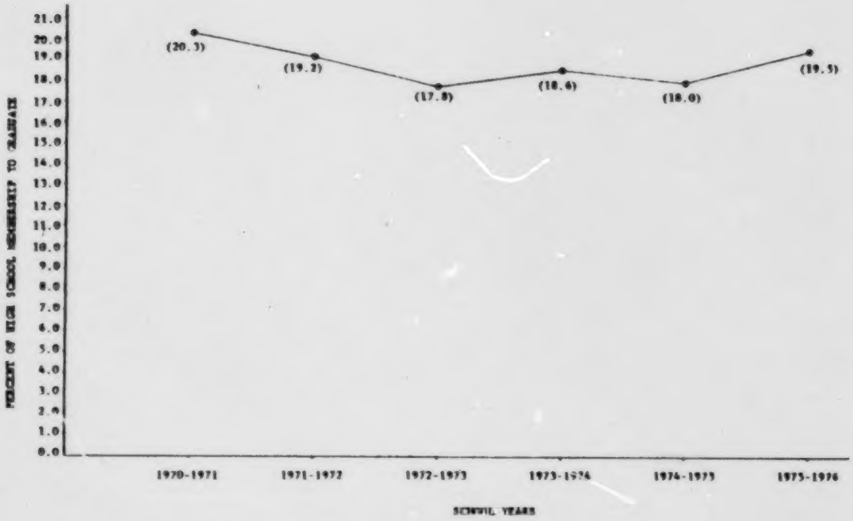
SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Graduation Rates

As a percent of 9th through 12th grade ADM, graduates vary from 20.3% to 17.8% over the past 6 years.

Dropout Data

The dropout rate has remained approximately constant for the past 3 years, 1972-75.



*High school membership here defined as ninth through twelfth grade students.

Figure IV-5: GRADUATION RATES FOR A SIX YEAR PERIOD. Percent of total membership in ninth through twelfth grades to graduate each year of a six year period. Percent is based on ninth through twelfth because some students graduate without ever being formally classified as a twelfth grader.

2b. **How many students are admitted to colleges of their choice?**

ANSWER: A large majority of those applying.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Former Student Questionnaire

Ninety-four percent (94%) of those responding to the former student questionnaire said that they were admitted to the college of their choice.

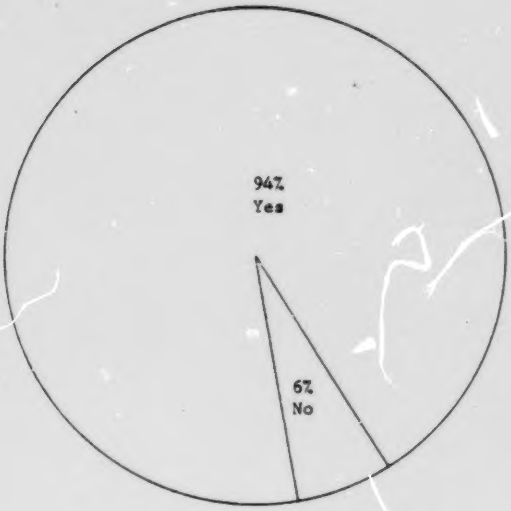


Figure IV-6: PERCENT OF FORMER STUDENTS APPLYING TO COLLEGE WHO WERE ADMITTED TO A COLLEGE OF THEIR CHOICE. **Based on responses of students graduating in May, 1975. Return rate of questionnaire was about 40%, which may have biased responses.**

2c. **How many students find a job satisfactory to them after high school graduation?**

ANSWER: A large majority of those employed.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Former Student Questionnaire

Ninety-six percent of students working fulltime that responded to the former student questionnaire said that their post-graduation jobs were either satisfactory or completely satisfactory.

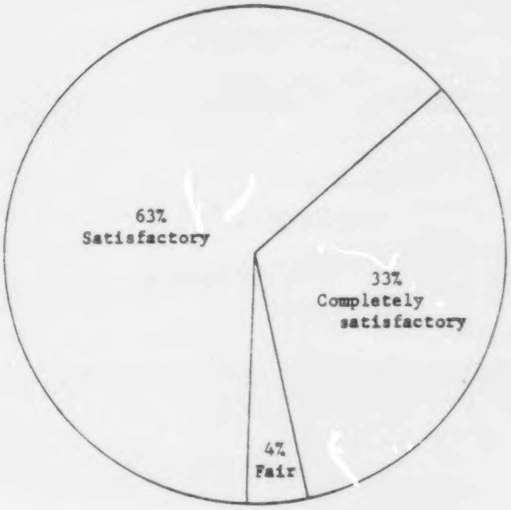


Figure IV-7: PERCENT OF FORMER STUDENTS WORKING WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS. Based on students graduating in May, 1975, and working full time in early 1976. Return rate of questionnaire was about 40%, which may have biased results.

3. What percentage of AISD graduates go into college? Which colleges?

ANSWER: Data suggest that a majority of students attend college; the largest group going to 4-year colleges such as UT (by far the largest group), SWTSU, Texas Tech and Texas A&M. Much smaller groups attend other 4-year schools, 2-year schools and trade or technical schools.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Former Student Questionnaire

Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents were attending college, with 59% of these in 4-year colleges. Eight percent attend 2-year colleges and another 8% were in trade or technical schools. The return rate on this questionnaire was only 40%; this may have biased the answer to this question.

College Board Data

The student requests for CEEB to send SAT scores to various colleges show a great preponderance for UT (80% of those requesting scores to be sent), with the next largest group requesting SWTSU (32%). Smaller groups requested scores sent to Texas Tech (14%) and Texas A&M (13%).

4. What kinds of jobs are AISD graduates filling one year after graduation?

ANSWER: Majority clerical. Others were sales, educational aide, military, beautician, housewife.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Former Student Questionnaire

Responses to a question on the questionnaire about currect position if working yielded these categories. The return rate was low and of those only 24% were in the non-college category. Since the questionnaire was sent to last year's graduates, these are not necessarily the kinds of jobs students who have been finished for some time are filling.

5a. How do students feel about high school in AISD?

ANSWER: Favorably to very favorably

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Students responded that they liked school either very much or a little during the 1975 school year by 78% in fall administration and 74% in spring. They also responded favorably to school this year by 71% in the fall and 72% in the spring. (The figures for the two years are not strictly comparable because one was asked after the end of the school year, the other during it).

5b. How do students feel about the quarter system?

ANSWER: Generally favorably

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Although students expressed a slight preference for school last year under the semester system, they also expressed a 56% in fall and 61% in spring favorable attitude toward the quarter system itself. They also were greatly in favor of the greater course variety and felt that their classes were either being taught better this year or at least as well as last year. Fifty percent in fall and 62% in spring said quarter courses were of more interest than the semester curriculum. This 12% rise may be reflective of greater familiarity and exposure to the new courses.

5c. How do students feel about the shorter courses?

ANSWER: More interesting; covering same amount of material as previously with less wasted time.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

One-half of students in the fall and 62% in spring found the shorter courses more interesting, while only 8% found them of less interest. Almost one-half said the 12-week courses cover

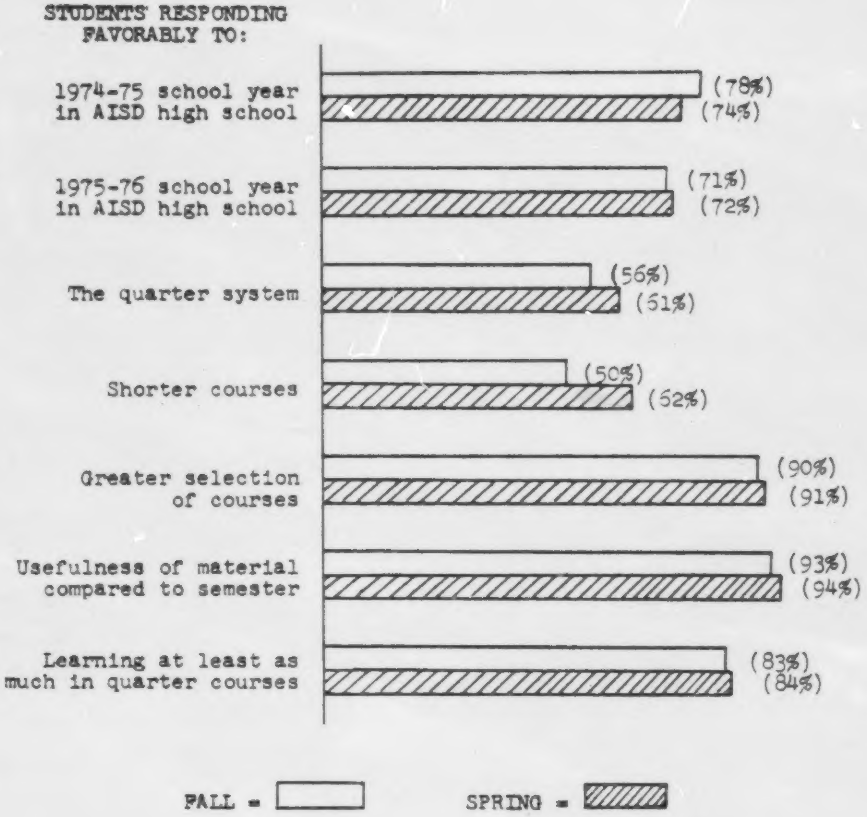


Figure IV-8: STUDENT ATTITUDES. Percent of students responding favorably during Fall, 1975 and Spring, 1976 to various questions regarding the AISD.

about the same amount of material as the 18-week semester courses and also one-half indicated less wasted time in the shorter courses. These two factors together could well explain why as much material can be covered in 6 weeks less. This also pleased students for 71% said they did not favor covering less material in a course.

5d. How do students feel about the greater selection of courses?

ANSWER: Very favorably

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Nine out of ten students see more course choice and variety as a good thing. A majority of 70% also feel the variety offered this year is about right.

5e. How do students feel about the new curriculum in general?

ANSWER: Favorably

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Over 90% said the material this year was as useful as or more useful than in the past and over one-half said they were required to study more this year. A large majority were learning as much as or more than in the semester courses and felt the number of courses offered in the major subject areas was appropriate. Quarter courses were seen as more interesting, and at the correct difficulty level; also, they did not suffer from lack of rigid sequencing.

5f. How do students feel about year-round schooling?

ANSWER: Most students would still choose to attend 3 quarters with summer off, but 17% would go all 4 quarters in order to graduate early.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire:

The chance for obtaining full quarter credit during the summer was attractive to 33% in the fall and 28% in the spring; these students chose to attend either all 4 quarters or 3 quarters including the summer quarter. The other students all expressed a preference for going fall, winter and spring quarters.

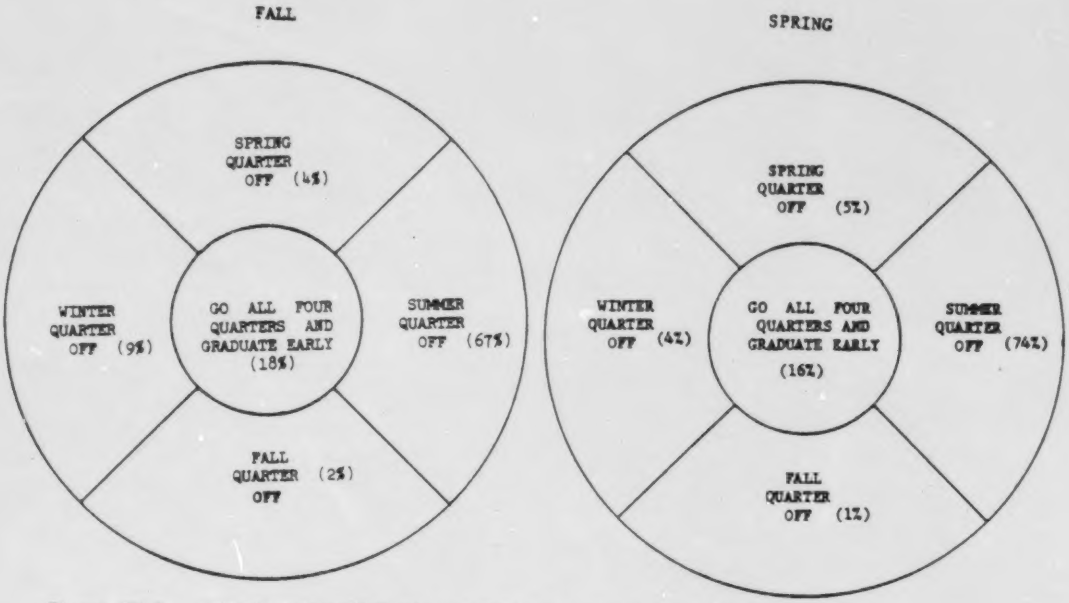


Figure IV-9: STUDENT PREFERENCE FOR QUARTER OFF. Percent of students responding to the question "Which three quarters would you choose to attend school if the summer quarter offered the same curriculum as the other quarters and was tuition free?"

5g. How do students feel about the preparation they are getting for later life?

ANSWER: Favorably

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Almost one-half felt they are learning more under the quarter system and only 16% felt they were learning less. Almost half plan to attend a four-year college upon graduation.

6. **Are students getting the courses they need to fulfill their own post-graduation plans?**

ANSWER: Largely, yes, but some problem areas may exist, especially for non-college bound students.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Former Student Questionnaire

Eight-five percent (85%) of former students in college responding said that high school has prepared them at least fairly adequately for entrance into the college of their choice. Forty-seven percent (47%), however, also maintained that graduation requirements should be made harder. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of students working said that their high school courses had prepared them for their employment, with 42% saying that they had not.

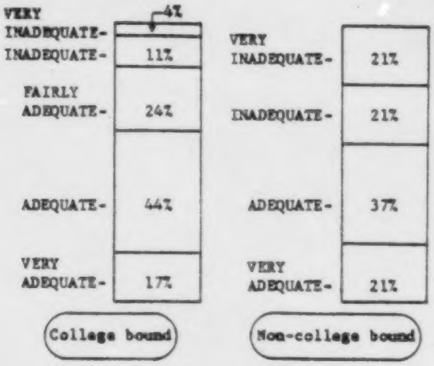


Figure IV-10: FORMER STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION. Responses of students graduating in May, 1975 to a question about the quality of their high school preparation for their present activities. Return rate of questionnaire was about 40%, which may have biased results.

Student Questionnaire

Sixty-eight percent of students were planning on attending some type of college upon graduation.

Parent Questionnaire

Eighty-three percent of parents responded that the education offered their children in high school was average or above.

Earned Credit Survey

No large differences in credits earned were found in many areas between students based upon their post-graduation plans. Requirements tended to dictate courses taken more than post-graduation plans; at least 70% of credits earned are taken in required subjects. College-bound twelfth graders were found to be low in foreign language credits (1.7 credits average), science (5.9 credits average) and in some cases math (6.1 credits average). These appear to be inadequate for students going into certain areas of study.

The table below presents the average number of credits earned in various areas for twelfth grade students at the end of winter quarter. The results are presented for students planning to enter four-year colleges and for students planning to enter technical or trade training or to work.

Table IV-2: NUMBER OF CREDITS COLLEGE BOUND AND NON-COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS HAVE IN SEVERAL AREAS. Average number of credits earned by the end of winter quarter, twelfth grade, by a sample of students listing their post-graduation goals as "Four-year college" or "Trade or technical school or work".

Curriculum area	Four-year College Bound	Non-College Bound
Language arts	10.2	10.3
College prep math	6.1	2.5
Non-college-prep math	2.7	4.4
Foreign languages	1.7	0.7
Science	5.9	5.1
Social Studies	10.1	8.9

Teacher Interviews

The responses on the teacher interview show a significant shift in opinion regarding the relative merits of the quarter verse semester systems. In fall, only 6% said that the old semester system was better; by spring this had risen to 27%. The numbers saying the two systems were of equal value did not change greatly, but those saying the quarter system was better fell by 16%. Not only was there less optimism about the quarter system, but a large number of teachers had altered their opinions from fall to spring in favor of the old semester system.

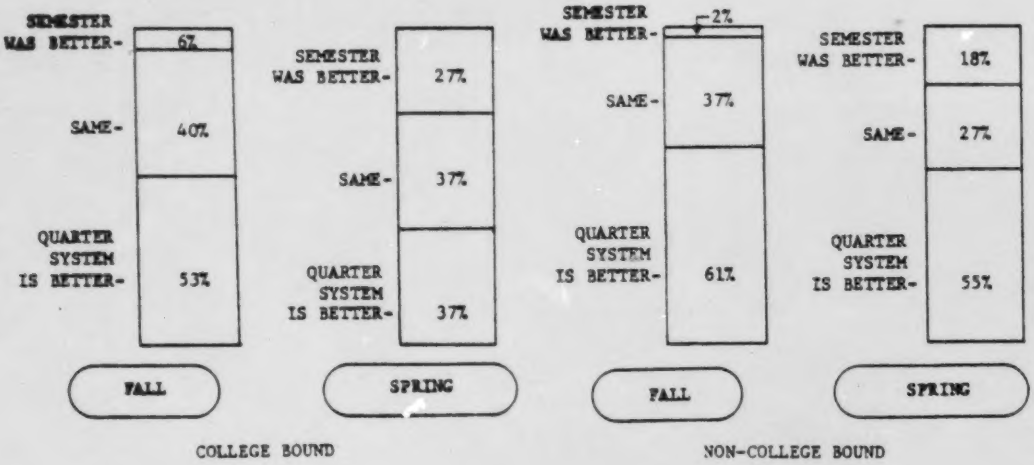


Figure IV-11: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF QUARTER SYSTEM PREPARATION OF STUDENTS COMPARED TO SEMESTER SYSTEM. Teacher responses to the question "Is the quarter system better than the semester system in preparing students for post-high school endeavors?". Fall and spring responses given for college-bound and non-college bound students. Responses from teacher interviews.

Senior High Teacher Questionnaire

Sixty percent of teachers feel that college-bound students are receiving appropriate courses, but only 41% say that those students not going to college do. For this latter group of students, 18% of teachers say that it is seldom the case that they get the appropriate courses.

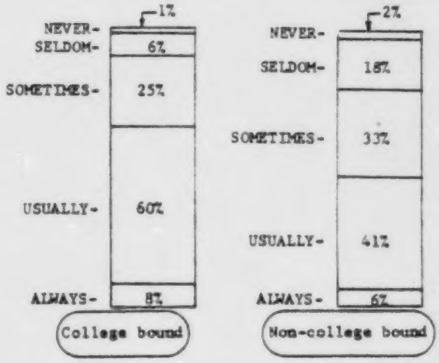


Figure IV-12: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATENESS OF STUDENTS' COURSES. Teacher responses on a questionnaire to a question about whether college bound and non-college bound students are getting enough appropriate courses.

7. **Has the quarter system had any effect on discipline in the high schools?**

ANSWER: **Uncertain, but shift since fall in a negative direction.**

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Although 49% of parents in the spring said that discipline was handled well or fairly well, this was down from 67% in the fall; the accompanying increase occurred in those saying that discipline was handled badly which increased from 22% in fall to 42% in spring.

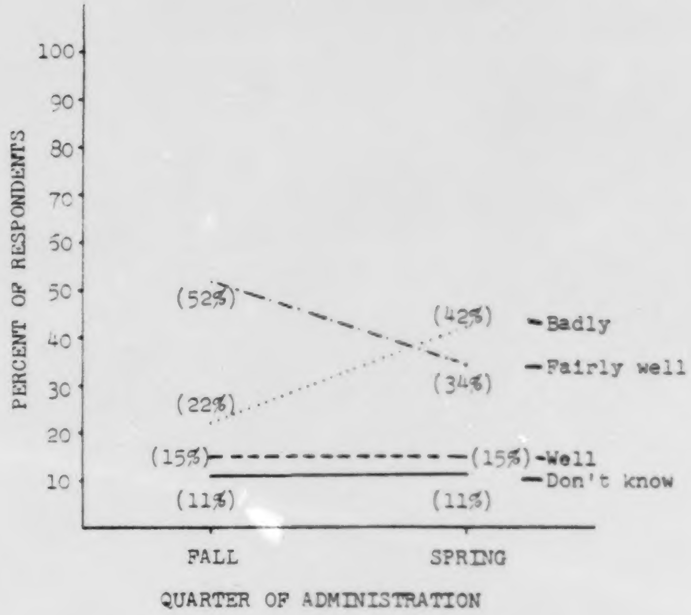


Figure IV-13: PARENT OPINIONS ON HOW AISD DISCIPLINE IS HANDLED. Fall, 1975 to Spring, 1976 comparison of parent responses on a questionnaire to a question regarding how they would rate how discipline is handled in AISD.

Teacher Interview

The majority of teachers (54%) in spring still felt that the quarter system had had no effect upon school discipline; this was, however, down from 66% in the fall. Most of the concomitant increase came in those who said discipline was worse; this percent rose from 6% in the fall to 17% in the spring.

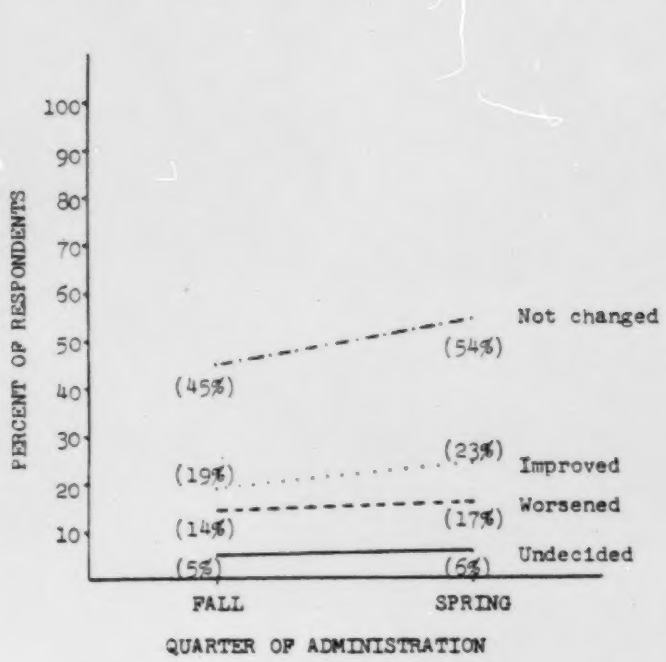


Figure IV-14: TEACHER OPINION OF DISCIPLINE IMPROVEMENT IN AISD HIGH SCHOOLS. Fall, 1975 to Spring, 1976 comparison of teacher responses to an interview question on how they see the improvement, if any, of AISD high school discipline.

Discipline Data

The discipline report for the 1975-1976 school year is not yet available; when it becomes available the data will be compared to the previous year to give additional information on this question.

Student Questionnaire

Students seem to think that there is no change in discipline. Fifty-eight percent in fall and 54% in spring said there had been no change in this area from the semester system. The small decline in this percentage was accounted for by an increase in those who said that there were more discipline problems this year (14% in fall to 17% in spring), but this is so small as to have questionable significance.

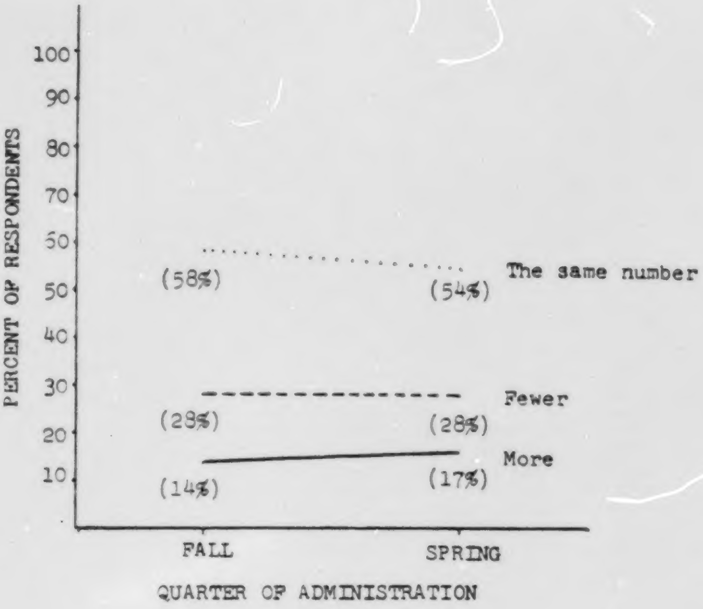


Figure IV-15: STUDENT OPINIONS ON NUMBER OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN AISD HIGH SCHOOLS. Fall, 1975 to Spring, 1976 comparison of student responses on a questionnaire to a question regarding the number of discipline problems in AISD high schools.

8. **Has the quarter system had any effect on students' study habits or attitudes toward school?**

ANSWER: Undetermined as yet.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes

The SSHA is a standardized test which questions students about their feelings and attitudes toward school. Students respond to each behaviorally phrased question by indicating how often a particular behavior applies to their own attitudes. The response mode ranges from R-Rarely to A-Almost Always. Student responses are analyzed and provide an objective measure of various aspects of academic behavior. Raw scores are converted to percentiles by using norming tables provided by the test publishers. The norm tables were established by the test publishers based on 5793 students from 14 school systems.

There are six subscales on the SSHA test. These are Delay Avoidance, Work Methods, Teacher Approval, Education Acceptance, Study Habits and Study Attitudes. By summing student scores on Delay Avoidance and Work Methods, a measure of Study Habits is obtained; by summing Teacher Approval and Education Acceptance, a measure of Study Attitudes is obtained. The sum of Study Habits and Study Attitudes yields a score for Total Student Orientation. High SSHA scores are characteristic of high achieving students; low SSHA scores are characteristic of low achieving students.

The scores on the SSHA are to be used as baseline data in subsequent years; they, in themselves, provide a picture of where study habits and attitudes toward school stand at the present and can be compared in the future to similar scores to see if the quarter system has had any long-range effects in this area. On all measures district scores were below the established national norms. Overall ranking was at the 30th percentile on the total score of Study Orientation. The scores by grade show the following:

Table IV-3: DISTRICT-WIDE AND GRADE BY GRADE SUMMARIES OF SCORES ON THE SURVEY OF STUDY HABITS AND ATTITUDES. Percentile scores compared to a national sample of students. Based on a sample of students tested in the spring of 1976.

	9th grade percentiles	10th grade percentiles	11th grade percentiles	12th grade percentiles	District Wide
Delay Avoidance	40	40	40	40	40
Work Methods	40	45	50	50	45
Study Habits	40	40	45	45	40
Teacher Approval	20	20	25	30	25
Education Acceptance	25	25	30	30	25
Study Attitudes	20	20	25	30	25
Study Orientation	30	30	35	35	30

These percentiles are based on norms gathered prior to 1965, they may not accurately reflect AISD's current standing compared to the nation as a whole since there are indications that study habits and attitudes are declining nation-wide. However, they do suggest that study habits and attitudes may be problem areas; the data from future years should therefore be of considerable interest.

9. How do parents feel about the expanded number of electives?

ANSWER: The majority are positive.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Parents responded by 53% in the spring that they did not feel that too many electives were offered under the quarter system; this was up from 49% in the fall. Of the remainder in the spring, 23% felt that there were too many electives offered and 22% were undecided.

10. What are the reactions to the larger variety of courses?

ANSWER: Largely favorable.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Students were overwhelmingly in favor of the larger number, greater variety and increased choice of courses. They responded 9 out of 10 that having more course choice was a good thing and approximately 70% said that the variety of courses this year was about right. Nineteen percent said that the variety was still not great enough. In specific subject areas such as social studies, science, math and P.E., the percentages were fairly constant: from 62-75% saying the number of courses offered was just right. In English, however, only 53% of students in the spring said that the number of courses was appropriate, down 7% from the fall; one-third of all students in the sample said there were too many English courses from which to choose.

Teacher Interviews

Although teachers are in favor of the new curriculum (in the spring 60% of teachers cited this as a major advantage), they note the additional amount of their time that is required for operating the new curriculum. Specifically, 75% in the spring said it required additional time outside of class to operate under the quarter system; activities related to the wider course variety requiring more time are multiple preparations (mentioned by 37%), establishing new courses (27%), and organizing and obtaining materials for multiple classes (18%). The majority of teachers in two areas, social studies and science, felt that there should be more sequencing of courses, even though this might restrict the students' choice of courses.

Teacher Questionnaire-Junior High Form

Since students at the high school level are provided with much more choice and variety of courses than formerly, teachers of junior high students were asked if junior highs should also provide more course choice. Forty-two percent said that junior high students did need more choice and variety, while 46% said they did not and 12% were undecided.

Parent Questionnaire

Parents agree that the number and types of courses available are adequate: in the spring 74% responded thus for math and 71% for English. The largest group of parents sees the quarter courses and semester courses as equally worthshile; however, the percent seeing the quarter system courses as more worthwhile rose from 25% in the fall to 35% in the spring, while the number seeing the semester courses as more worthwhile rose from 5% in the fall to 11% in the spring.

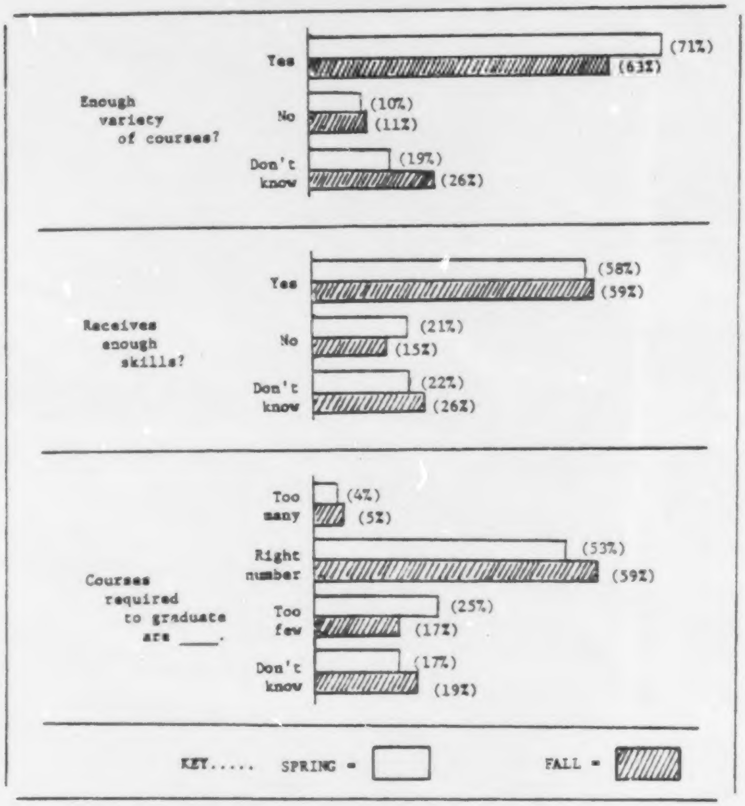


Figure IV-16: PARENT OPINIONS ABOUT THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM. Percent of parents making various responses in the fall and spring about the English curriculum.

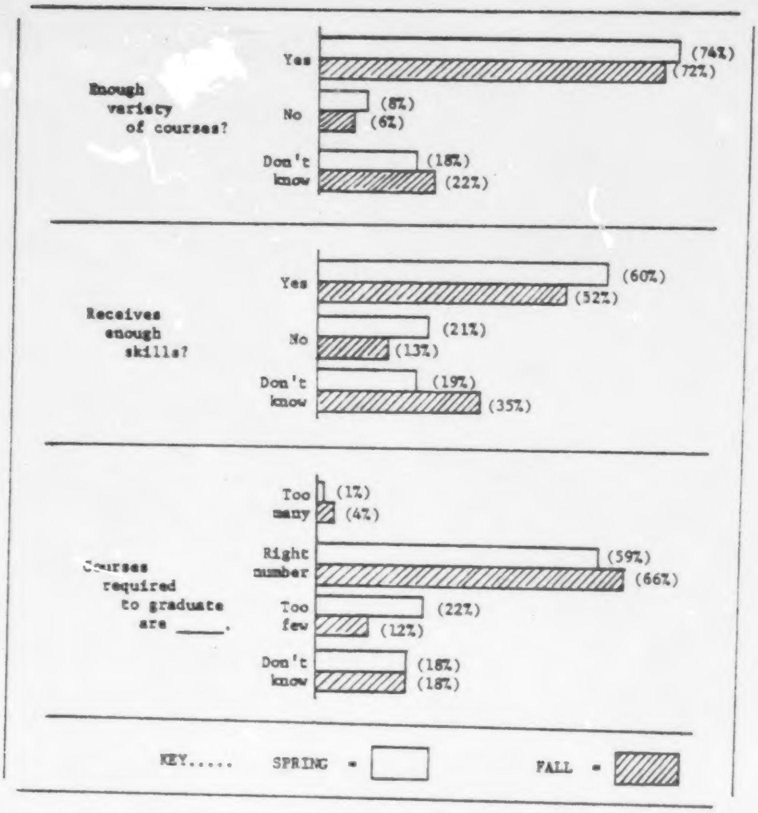


Figure IV-17: PARENT OPINIONS ABOUT THE MATH CURRICULUM. Percent of parents making various responses in the fall and spring about the math curriculum.

11. What changes do teachers feel need to be made in department course offerings?

ANSWER: Varies with the subject area; generally needs of non-college-bound student seen as less well met than those of college-bound. Junior high teachers equivocal on expanding course offerings.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Teacher Questionnaire--Form A

In general, teachers felt that the college-bound student usually is offered a sufficient number of appropriate courses; the response to this was 60% saying this is usually the case and 25% saying this is at least sometimes so. For the non-college-bound student, teacher response were markedly more negative. Only 41% said they usually are offered the appropriate courses, with 33% saying sometimes and 18% responding that this is seldom the case.

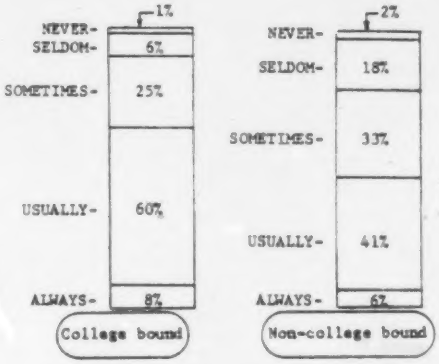


Figure IV-18: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATENESS OF STUDENTS' COURSES. Teacher responses on a questionnaire to a question about whether college bound and non-college bound students are getting enough appropriate courses.

Teacher Questionnaire--Language Arts and Social Studies Area Specific Forms

Much data was gathered on these forms by the instructional coordinators for their particular area; the information relating to specific course offerings and content is too detailed to be presented fully in this context. Some of the more salient aspects include a majority of teachers in language arts favoring the retention of Orientation to Language Arts, a required course, in its present form and a majority favoring certain course additions for next year. In social studies a large majority see a need for requirements in both World History and World Geography (70%), and 63% say that students who plan to enter college get enough preparatory courses in social studies.

Teacher Interviews

The responses to the question of the relative merits of the quarter and semester systems in terms of student preparation show a definate shift in favor of the semester system for both the college- and non-college-bound. In fall, only 6% said that the semester system had offered students better preparation for college; by spring this had risen to 27%. For the non-college-bound, those feeling the semester system offered better preparation rose from 2% (Fall) to 18% (Spring). There were corresponding drops in those saying the systems offered similar preparation and those stating that the quarter system was superior in this regard.

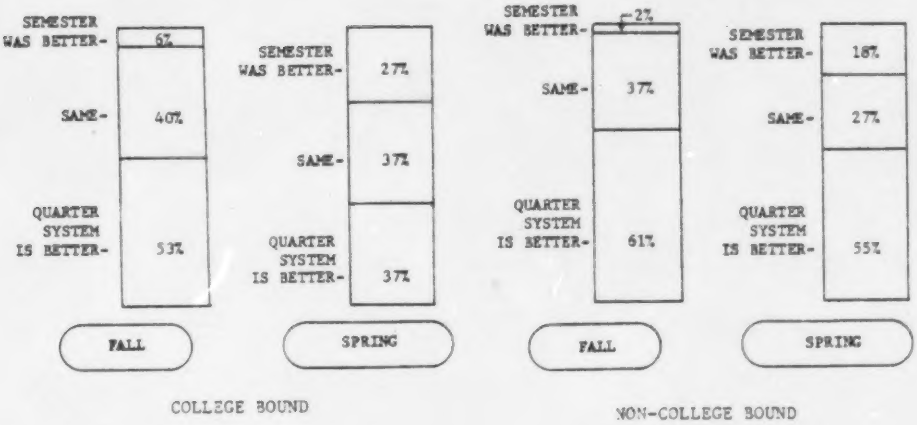


Figure IV-19: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF QUARTER SYSTEM PREPARATION OF STUDENTS COMPARED TO SEMESTER SYSTEM. Teacher responses to the question "Is the quarter system better than the semester system in preparing students for post-high school endeavors?" Fall and spring responses given for college bound and non-college bound students. Responses from teacher interviews.

12. **How do students feel about the quality of teaching under the quarter system?**

ANSWER: About the same as under the semester system.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Students responded by 53% in both fall and spring that they saw little change in the quality of teaching from the semester to the quarter system. Five percent more in spring did say that teaching was better under the quarter system, with 5% drop in those saying it was worse than under the semester system.

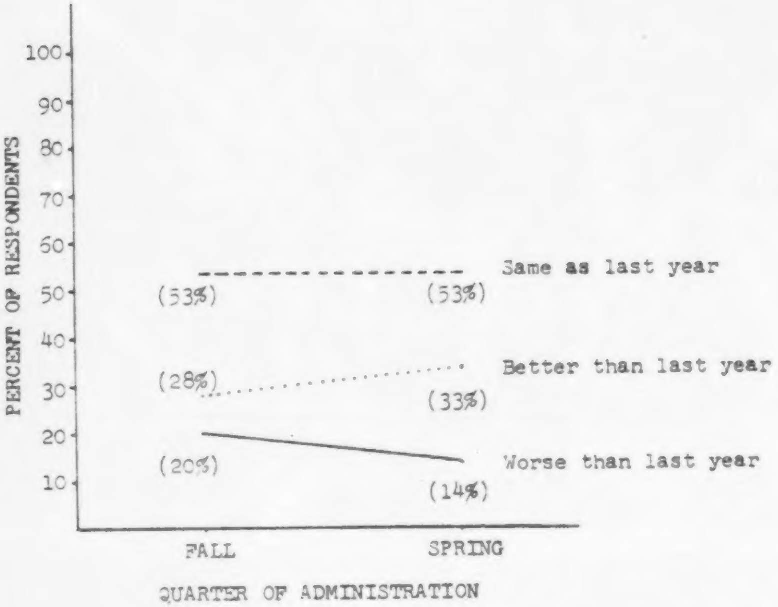


Figure IV-20: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY OF TEACHING. Fall and spring responses on a questionnaire to a question about the quality of teaching under the quarter system.

13. Who is seen as the best person to do advising? What problems are seen?

ANSWER: Most see subject area teachers as the most appropriate advisors. Many problems are reported, but they have diminished since fall.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Students felt they obtained the best advice about course selection from subject area teachers for each area; 74% named subject teachers as the best source of information. They also responded by 52% in the fall and 48% in spring that this was in fact where they had gotten the most advice. Overall, students seem to feel that they are taking the appropriate courses. Course descriptions were also seen as helpful in obtaining course information; although evening course fairs were not attended by the majority (65% in fall and 52% in spring), they were viewed as helpful by those who did attend. Only 57% of the students said that they had received enough information for choosing courses; the advice they did receive was viewed as accurate and helpful for all or all but 1 of their courses by 66% of students.

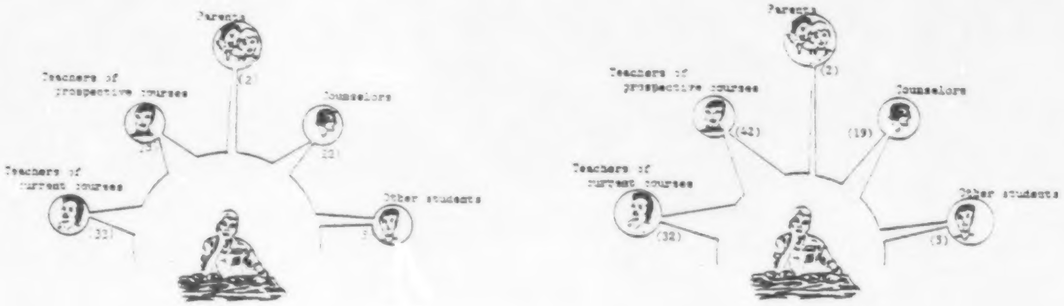

Parents
(2)
Teachers of prospective courses
Counselors
(22)
Teachers of current courses
(32)
Other students
Parents
(2)
Teachers of prospective courses
(42)
(19)
Counselors
Teachers of current courses
(32)
Other students
(3)

Figure IV-21: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF WHO SHOULD DO MOST ADVISING. Fall and spring responses on a questionnaire to a question about who should do most advising of students on which courses to take. Percent of students giving each alternative.

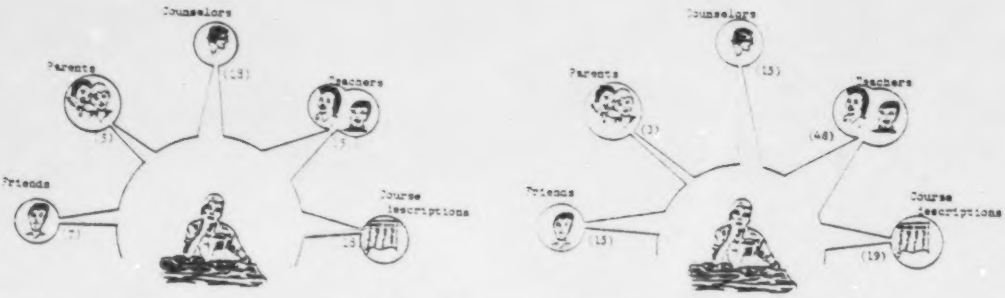


Figure IV-22: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF WHO GAVE THE MOST INFORMATION ON WHICH COURSES TO TAKE. Percent of students on a questionnaire indicating various alternatives as giving the most information on which courses to take, fall and spring.

Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

This group was much more negative about the advising process than the students sampled. Seventy-seven percent in fall and 69% in spring said that changes need to be made in advising procedure. The specific changes mentioned most often were more information and training for advisors, more coordination between counselors and advisors and more responsibility to teachers for advising students. In the fall, the non-teaching faculty split fairly evenly on who should have advising responsibility with 36% saying teachers and 34% counselors and other responses dividing the remaining percentage; in the spring, however, the vote for giving the responsibility to subject area teachers had risen to 60% response. This falls in line with what other groups said about advising as well. In the spring the majority still felt that advisors needed more training for such areas as vocational guidance (82%), advising the college-bound (82%), course content (76%) and graduation requirements (87%).

Teacher Interviews

Teachers agree that they should have the primary advising responsibility, but only for courses in their subject area; the number of teachers responding this way rose from 33% in the fall to 41% in the spring. Twenty-two teachers in the spring felt that counselors should also have a large responsibility in this area, up from 19% responses in the fall. A large majority also said that subject area teachers are in fact the major advisors and this should be continued. Problems with advising centered mainly in two areas: too little time allotted to advise adequately and problems with students taking inappropriate courses because of a lack of information or scheduling error. The number of teachers citing scheduling and advising as a major disadvantage of the quarter system fell dramatically from 43 in fall to 20 in spring, only about one-quarter of teachers interviewed. This is probably reflective of changes made during the year and of experience with the whole advising process. Eleven, however, still list advising in the spring as an area needing change and improvement.

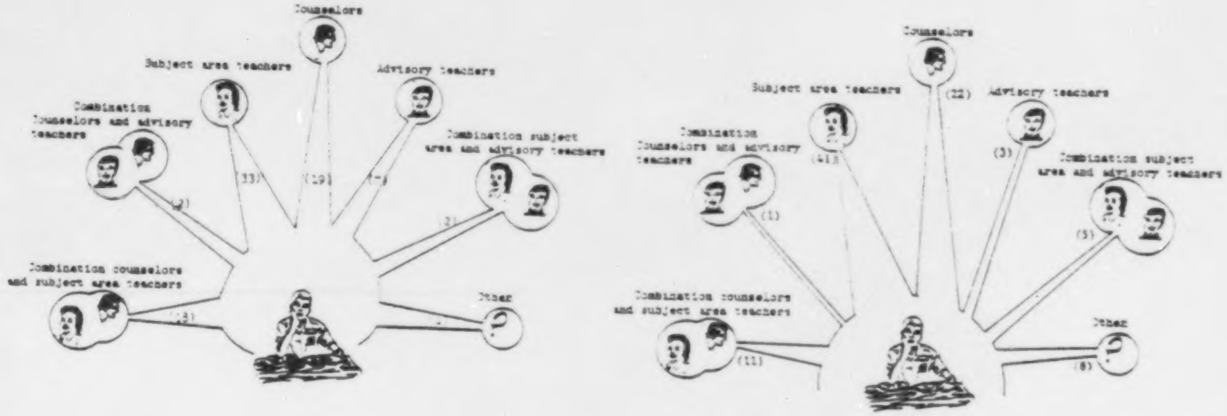


Figure IV-23: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF WHO SHOULD HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVISING STUDENTS. Fall and spring responses to the question "Who should have the primary responsibility for advising students?" Number of teachers naming each alternative in an interview.

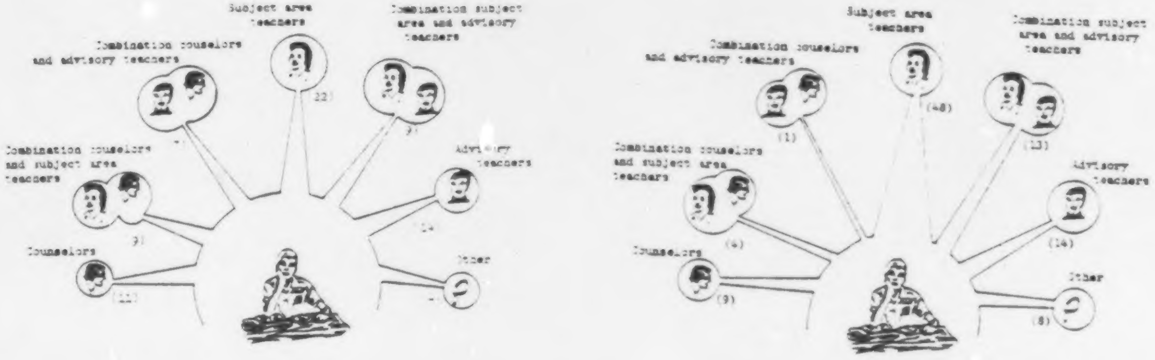


Figure IV-24: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF WHO DID MOST OF THE ADVISING OF STUDENTS. Fall and spring responses to the question "Who actually does most of the advising?" Number of teachers naming each alternative in an interview.

Parent Questionnaire

Parents see the counselors as the major source of advice for students, but here too the shift toward subject teachers as advisors is evident. In the fall, 49% said the counselor should have major advising responsibility; this fell to 39% in spring. In contrast, those assigning this to subject teachers rose from 23% to 30%. Teachers were also seen as in fact providing the most advice by 32% of parents; counselors as the major source of advice in this area fell from 32% to 26%. Course guides were also seen as quite useful in this regard. Sixty-two percent of parents in the spring felt that their child had received enough advice for deciding on courses, up from 56% in the fall. Eighty-five percent in spring as opposed to 77% in the fall said their child was able to take the courses he/she wanted and needed.

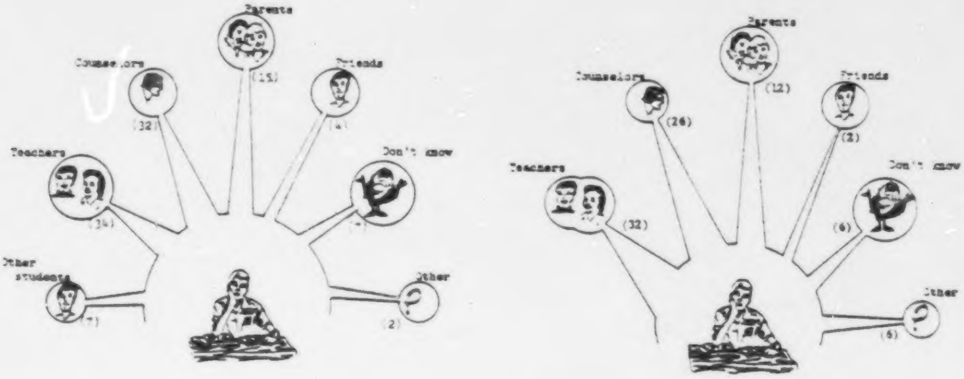


Figure IV-25: PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF WHO GAVE THEIR CHILDREN THE MOST HELP IN CHOOSING COURSES. Percent of parents naming various alternatives on a questionnaire, fall and spring.

14. Do students have the information they need to choose courses?

ANSWER: Generally yes.

SUPPORTIVE DATA: Student Questionnaire

Fifty-seven percent of students responded that they had received enough information for choosing their courses, which leaves 43% who did not; these students need a better basis for selecting courses. Students, by 74%, felt that the course description guide was helpful in choosing courses, but most students (65% in fall and 52% in spring) said they did not attend a course fair at all. (This is probably referring to the evening course fair, since attendance at the one held during school hours was not voluntary). Most of those who did attend found them useful and the 13% attendance rise from fall to spring may indicate an increasing awareness of their value. Most students said that the advice they did receive was good; 66% said they got good advice in all or all but one of their courses. Teachers were seen as the major source of course advice for students and a majority of 68% said there were no other courses they should have taken to prepare them for the ones they were in, with an additional 24% in the fall and 20% in the spring saying they should have taken other courses before only one of their present courses.

15. Do parents have the information they need to help their children choose courses?

ANSWER: Parents do not have information, but parents and students do not feel parents should be the primary advisors on courses.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Student Questionnaire

Only 4% of students said they got most of their course advice from parents and only 2% felt parents should be the primary source of advice for students.

Parent Questionnaire

Although parents do feel that they received enough information about the quarter system (by 66% in the spring), they do not feel that they do or should act as primary advisor for their children. Only 13% of parents said that it was they who gave their children the most advice on courses and only 5% in the spring said parents should be the main advisor. They see this as falling to the counselors and teachers. Even though they are not advising to any great extent themselves, parents do feel that their students are receiving adequate information (62% in the spring) and that they are allowed to take the courses wanted or needed.

16. Do students, parents, coordinators and non-teaching faculty feel that the course fairs are worthwhile?

ANSWER: Yes, with reservations and modification.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

There was a sizeable group (49% fall/48% spring) of parents who responded that they did not know if the course fairs were helpful to students. Of those who did have an opinion, almost all said that the course fairs had been helpful.

Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

In fall responses, 72% of non-teaching faculty members felt the course fairs were helpful to students in selecting courses and preparing schedules; in the spring this had dropped to 62%. Sixty-six percent (66%) in fall said they were helpful in aiding students going through the registration process; this also dropped in spring to 47%, with 30% saying they did not help in this regard. Seventy percent (70%) of fall respondents said the course fairs should be continued while only 57% in spring thought so; of the remainder, only 9% in fall said they should not be continued, rising to 22% in spring. The primary suggestions for modifying and improving were made in the spring; they were that the course fairs should be better organized (5 responses), that teachers needed to be more involved and cooperative (5), and that the course fairs' relevance and importance should be stressed to students (5).

Coordinator Interviews

Ten of the 12 coordinators responding to this question felt that the course fairs were worthwhile.

Student Questionnaire

Although 65% of students in fall and 52% in spring said that they did not attend a course fair at all, this may have indicated more a misunderstanding of the term than high absenteeism. Since there were optional course fairs held at night for parents and students in addition to the mandatory ones during school hours, there may have been confusion as to how this question was answered by students. Of those who did attend in the fall, twice as many found them useful as not useful; in spring somewhat over half said they were helpful.

17a. What differences are found in enrollment patterns by ethnicity?

ANSWER: There are certain discernable patterns in course enrollments by ethnicity. Mexican-American students tend to be overrepresented in the areas of business education, reading, career/cooperative education, fundamentals of math, homemaking and art; they tend to be underrepresented in the areas of drama and foreign languages other than Spanish. Blacks tend to be overrepresented in the areas of homemaking and fundamentals of math and underrepresented in advanced math, foreign languages and journalism. Anglo students are overrepresented in areas of advanced math, journalism, drama and foreign language other than Spanish; they are underrepresented in the areas of homemaking, business education, reading and career/cooperative education and fundamentals of mathematics.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Course Enrollment Data

The ethnic distribution of AISD high school students is approximately 13% Black, 17% Mexican-American and 70% Anglo and other. The following data on course enrollments for 1975-76 show courses where this proportion of the three major ethnic groups is not in line with this overall school distribution for ethnicity.

Table IV-4: COURSE ENROLLMENT PERCENTS BY ETHNICITY FOR COURSES DIFFERING FROM THE DISTRICT ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION. Percent of the enrollment in various course areas which is from each of three major ethnic groups. Given for those areas where ethnic distribution was different from the district distribution.

FALL QUARTER	M/A	Black	Anglo
Journalism	15%	5%	80%
Fundamentals of math	29%	26%	45%
Advanced math	9%	3%	88%
French	7%	12%	80%
German	3%	4%	93%
Latin	6%	3%	90%
Vocational homemaking	16%	27%	57%
WINTER QUARTER			
Business education	30%	9%	61%
Reading	39%	15%	46%
Fundamentals of math	47%	22%	31%
Advanced math	9%	1%	90%
French	9%	8%	83%

Table IV-4 Continued.

	M/A	Black	Anglo
German	4%	4%	92%
Latin	11%	2%	87%
Spanish	27%	4%	69%
Vocational homemaking	25%	22%	53%
Art	31%	14%	55%
Career/cooperative ed.	40%	11%	49%
SPRING QUARTER			
Reading	37%	17%	46%
Fundamentals of math	39%	26%	35%
Advanced math	8%	3%	89%
French	8%	9%	83%
German	4%	3%	93%
Latin	8%	3%	89%
Vocational homemaking	22%	25%	53%
Art	29%	12%	59%
Career/cooperative ed.	30%	10%	60%

17b. What differences are found in enrollment patterns by sex?

ANSWER: There are certain discernable patterns in course enrollments by sex. Female students are overrepresented in areas of business education, drama, French, Spanish, vocational homemaking, vocal music and career/cooperative education; they are underrepresented in areas of fundamentals of math, advanced math, German and industrial arts. Male students are overrepresented in fundamentals of math, advanced math, German and industrial arts; they are underrepresented in business education, drama, French, Spanish, vocational homemaking, vocal music and career/cooperative education.

SURPORTIVE DATA:

Course Enrollment Data

The sex distribution of AISD high school is approximately 50% male and 50% female. The following data on course enrollments for 1975-76 show courses where this proportion of sex is not in line with the overall school distribution in courses.

Table IV-5: COURSE ENROLLMENT PERCENTS BY SEX FOR COURSES DIFFERING FROM AN EQUAL DISTRIBUTION. Percent of male and female enrollment in various course areas where male or female enrollment predominates.

FALL QUARTER	Male	Female
Business education	28%	72%
Drama	39%	61%
Fundamentals of math	59%	41%
Advanced math	66%	34%
French	32%	68%
German	59%	41%
Spanish	44%	56%
Vocational homemaking	33%	67%
Vocal music	36%	64%
Industrial arts	83%	17%
Career/cooperative ed.	41%	59%
WINTER QUARTER		
Business education	26%	74%
Drama	54%	46%
Fundamentals of math	58%	42%
Advanced math	62%	38%
French	33%	67%
German	62%	38%
Spanish	44%	56%
Vocational homemaking	26%	74%
Vocal music	47%	53%
Industrial arts	74%	26%
SPRING QUARTER		
Business education	25%	75%
Drama	46%	54%
Fundamentals of math	61%	39%
Advanced math	63%	37%
French	31%	69%
German	61%	39%
Spanish	44%	56%
Vocational homemaking	31%	69%
Vocal music	38%	62%
Industrial arts	74%	26%
Career/cooperative ed.	38%	62%

#18. Do former students and non-teaching faculty feel that graduation requirements should be changed?

ANSWER: Very mixed opinions.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Former Student Questionnaire

Former students answering the questionnaire split almost evenly between those who felt that requirements should remain as they are (50%) and those feeling that they should be made harder (47%). Of former students now in college, 61% said that high school had prepared them adequately or very adequately; 15% said that the preparation had been inadequate or very inadequate.

Of former students not now in college 47% felt that their high school training had prepared them well or very well for their jobs and 34% felt that it had not; 19% were not employed.

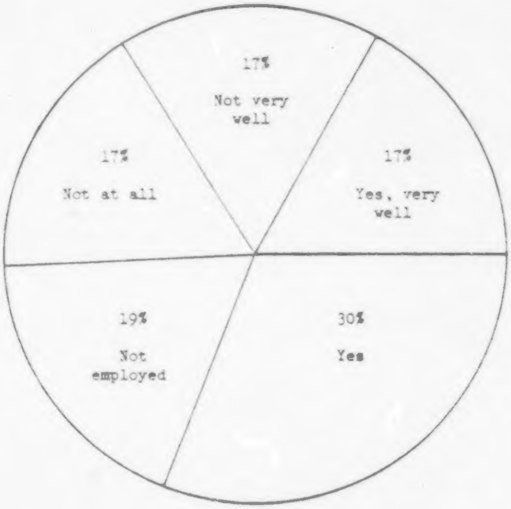


Figure IV-26: HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT. Percent for each response given by AISD students who graduated in May, 1975, to the question "Did the required high school courses prepare you for employment?" Return rate of questionnaire was about 40%, which may have biased results.

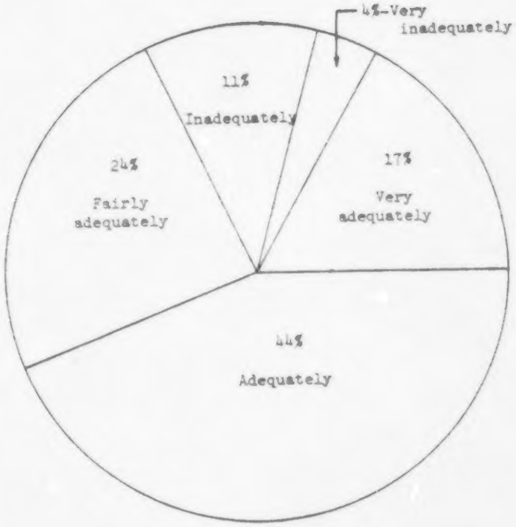


Figure IV-27: HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE. Percent for each response of AISD students who graduated in May, 1975, responding to the question "Did your high school program prepare you for entrance to the college of your choice?" The return rate of the questionnaire was about 40%, which may have biased the results.

Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

The non-teaching faculty were also mixed in their responses. In the fall, 66% said that the current requirements meet the needs of college-bound students, but only 42% said they were adequate for the non-college-bound; the majority of the remaining respondents in both cases fell into the undecided category. In spring, those feeling current requirements were adequate fell to 58% for the college-bound and 48% for the non-college-bound student. A more significant change can be seen in those shifting from uncertain to requirements as inadequate. In fall, only 12% saw requirements as inadequate for college-bound and 18% for non-college; in spring these has risen to 23% and 37% respectively. These may well reflect the impact of the new curriculum on the non-teaching faculty's judgement of what training students are getting.

Earned Credit Survey and Dropout Data

The survey of credits students receive shows that a large majority, approximately 70%, are obtained in required areas. If graduation requirements are altered, it could well mean that this figure would be changed. Also, the baseline dropout data might well be changed by an alteration of graduation requirements; if they were made more strigent, it would prevent some students from graduating and if made more liberal, the dropout rate might well decline in the future as a result. The present dropout rate is approximately 8% of 9th through 12th graders.

19a. How do teachers feel about teaching some very large sections in exchange for some very small ones?

ANSWER: Uncertain

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Teacher Interview

Teachers were asked if they would agree to teach large sections certain periods in exchange for small sections a at other periods. In the fall, the response was quite negative, but by spring it had modified somewhat. In fall, 60% said no, while in spring this fell to 36%. The number saying yes for certain courses or levels doubled. This may be reflective of experience along these lines already encountered under the quarter system.

19b. What size classes are being offered?

ANSWER: The range of enrollments is wide with some small classes being offered only by having one teacher teach several courses during the same period.

Course Enrollment Data

These data show that the class size at every school ranges considerably, from 1-35 students. (This does not mean that a teacher actually has a class with as few as one student, but that only a few were signed up for that course at that period. In these cases, more than one course is usually assigned to a teacher for that period). About one fifth of the courses being taught had enrollments under 20; many of these probably could not be offered if a strict minimum were enforced. The number of small courses also increased from fall to spring. The prevalence of 35 as maximum probably indicates this as the normal enrollment ceiling; this may indicate that some students who requested the course did not receive it once this ceiling was reached.

20a. What do AISD school personnel feel is the best way to facilitate planning by department chairpersons?

ANSWER: Provide them with an additional conference period.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Principal Interviews

Principals responded by eight to one that an additional conference period was the best way to aide department chairpersons in performing their duties.

Coordinators Interviews

Eleven coordinators felt that an additional conference period was the best way to facilitate planning and other activities of the department chairperson. In addition, three supported a stipend and two said a comprehensive job description would be of the most use.

Department Chairperson Questionnaire

Forty-five percent of department chairpersons themselves said that certain activities that they are assigned could be delegated to others. More specifically, they cited accounting for books (ten department chairpersons), scheduling (7), distribution of materials (7), and ordering supplies and materials (6) as primary duties that could be delegated to others within the school.

20b. What changes have occurred in the department chairpersons' role?

ANSWER: The department chairperson's role has been changed by assigning them more duties, requiring more time of them, involving them more in scheduling, advising and registration, and assigning more responsibility for ordering and controlling materials and supplies.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Department Chairperson Questionnaire

Sixty-three percent of department chairpersons say that the quarter system has changed their role. They cite more time and activities (19 chairpersons), more scheduling and advising responsibility (17), more activities relating to purchasing and accounting for supplies and materials (10) and more coordinating activities as the areas of most extensive changes.

Principal Interviews

Most principals saw the department chairperson's role as changed under the quarter system; they mentioned the activities of scheduling and registration as the **largest areas** of change, but named many others. These are illustrated in the figure below.

Coordinator Interviews

Almost all coordinators saw changes already occurring for the department chairperson. The most important of these seem to be more involvement in scheduling (6 coordinators), and the requirement for more time delegated to departmental activities (3).

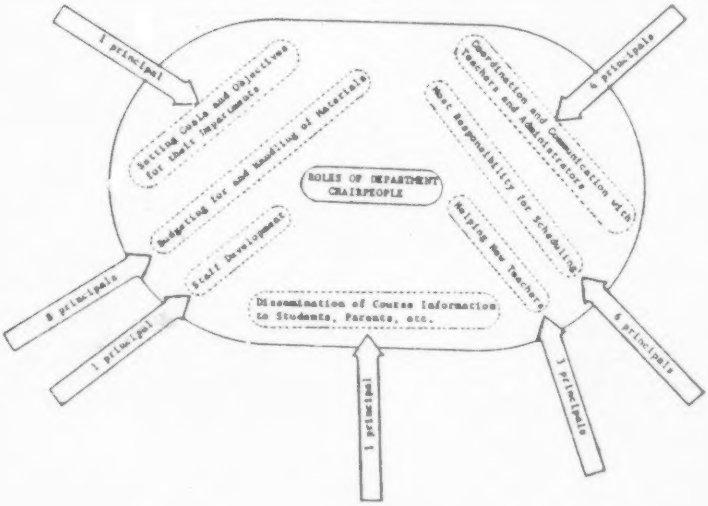

ROLES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRPEOPLE
1 principal
Setting Goals and Objectives for their Departments
Budgeting for and Handling of Materials
8 principals
Staff Development
1 principal
Dissemination of Course Information to Students, Parents, etc.
1 principal
Coordination and Communication with Teachers and Administrators
4 principals
Most Responsibility for Scheduling
6 principals
Helping New Teachers
3 principals

Figure IV-28: ROLES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS. Various roles of the department chairpersons cited by senior high principals in the fall of 1975. In the spring they indicated that there had been little change in the roles.

21. What training do AISD personnel feel advisors need to best fulfill their task?

ANSWER: Teachers feel that they do not need additional training to advise for their subject area and students feel that they are receiving adequate advice, but non-teaching faculty feel that additional training is needed for advisors in the areas of graduation requirements, vocational and college guidance and in course content.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Teacher Interviews

Sixty-three percent of teachers in spring felt that the advising process at their school was adequate; this was with 48 of the 83 saying that teachers for their subject area were the primary advisors. When asked about inservice, 55% in fall and 46% in spring felt that the quarter system has changed inservice needs, but only one person in spring placed advising training as a priority for inservice. Eleven teachers felt, however, that the advising process did need improvement.

Student Questionnaire

Fifty-seven percent of students in the spring felt that they had received enough information for choosing courses and 66% said they were given good advise on all or all but one of their courses. The largest group of students saw subject area teachers as the primary advisor (48%) and 76% felt that this was appropriate.

Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

In both fall and spring, non-teaching faculty were very vocal about the need for additional training for advising. By 77% in fall and 69% in spring, they said that changes were needed in the advising procedure. The changes most often recommended were additional time and information for advisory teachers (10 fall responses), advisors obtaining information from subject area teachers (11 in fall), and better coordination between counselors and subject area teachers (9 in fall). In the spring these suggestions were altered somewhat and new concerns of inserice training for advisors (9) and giving more advising responsibility to teachers (11) appeared. A major shift in who should have the advising responsibility occurred in responses from non-teaching faculty; in the fall, 34% said counselors and 36% subject area teachers, while by spring this had shifted to 60% in favor of subject teachers and only 26% saying counselors. Specifically related to training for advising, the spring figures show 80% saying that training was needed concerning vocational guidance for students; 79% felt this was needed for advising college-bound students and 82% said it was needed for knowledge of course content.

22. In what areas is it felt that teachers need additional training?

ANSWER: Most groups see the primary need in the area of specifics for the new courses and expanded curriculum; non-teaching faculty also see a need for training in advising.

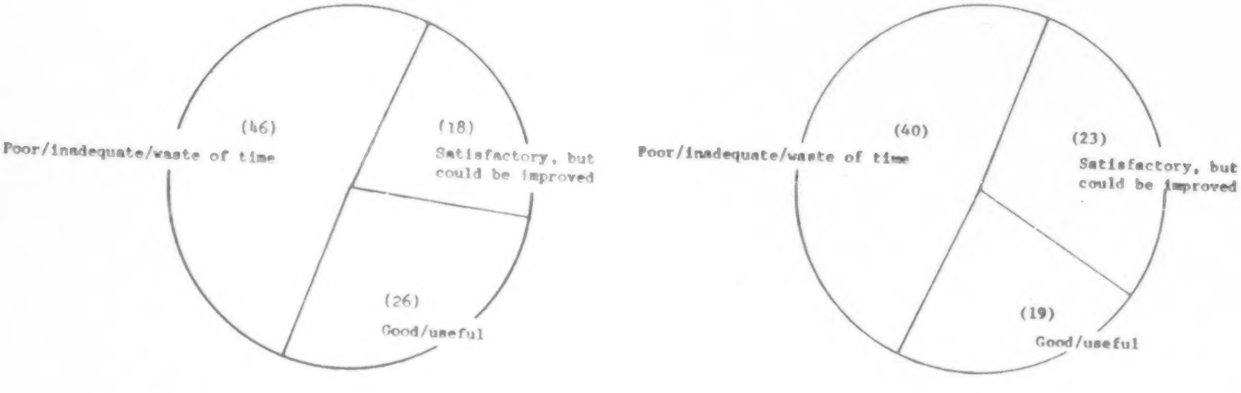
SUPPORTIVE DATA

Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

This group felt that teachers need additional training for teaching the expanded curriculum (55% fall response rate/54% spring) and planning the course content of expanded course offerings (60% fall/65% spring). They also felt that advisors need training in graduation requirements (87% fall/45% spring), vocational guidance (82% fall/80% spring), college guidance (82%fall/79% spring) and course content (76% fall/82% spring).

Teacher Interviews

Teachers themselves do not see a great need for advising training, but do see needs in preparation for new courses (11 responses in fall/5 in spring), and training by subarea and course in specifics for the new offerings (26 fall/26 spring). Also mentioned as important in this area were exposure to new teaching techniques and materials (31 fall/25 spring) and sharing of ideas with teachers of same courses (30 in fall/39 spring).



Fall

Spring

Figure IV-29: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF INSERVICE NEEDS. Number of teachers listing various inservice desires in the fall of 1975 and the spring of 1976 teacher interviews.

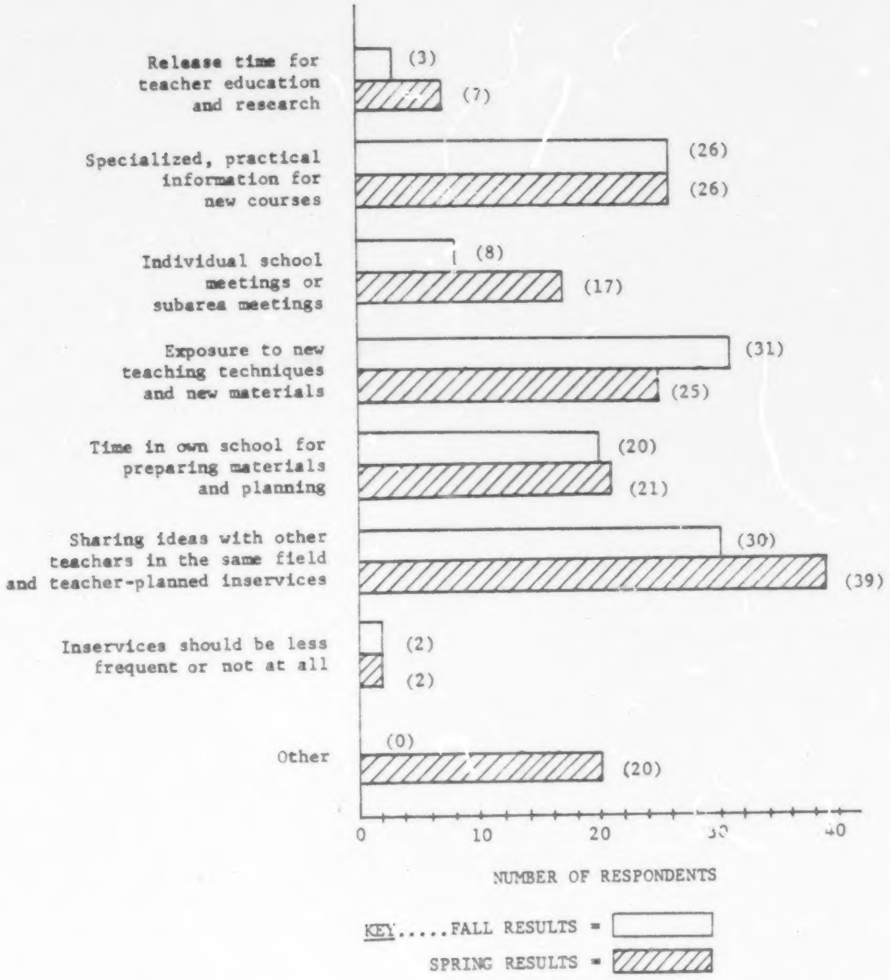


Figure IV-30 : TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF DISTRICT INSERVICE. Number of teachers giving various opinions of the value of the district inservice during fall and spring teacher interviews. Fall numbers based on 90 respondents, spring on 92 respondents.

Coordinator Interviews

Coordinators see a need for instruction for teachers in new course content (6 responses) as the primary priority for training.

Principal Interviews

Principals seem to see much less training need for teachers than do other groups. Only two suggestions were received, for the needs of data processing and registration mechanics and curriculum familiarity. Seven said additional training for teachers was either not needed or not wanted.

23. Are students getting the courses they request?

ANSWER: Yes

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Course Enrollment Data

The majority of student course requests were filled, with requests exceeding enrollments by an average of approximately 8% in the fall. This means that overall 8% of course requests in fall were unfulfilled.

Parent Questionnaire

Seventy-seven percent of parents in fall and 85% in spring said that their children were allowed to take the courses they really wanted.

Student Questionnaire

Students responded by 67% in fall and 66% in spring that they got all of the courses that they wanted; an additional 19% in fall and 20% in spring got all but one of their requested courses. Only 3% in fall and 2% in spring said that they received fewer than three of their requested courses.

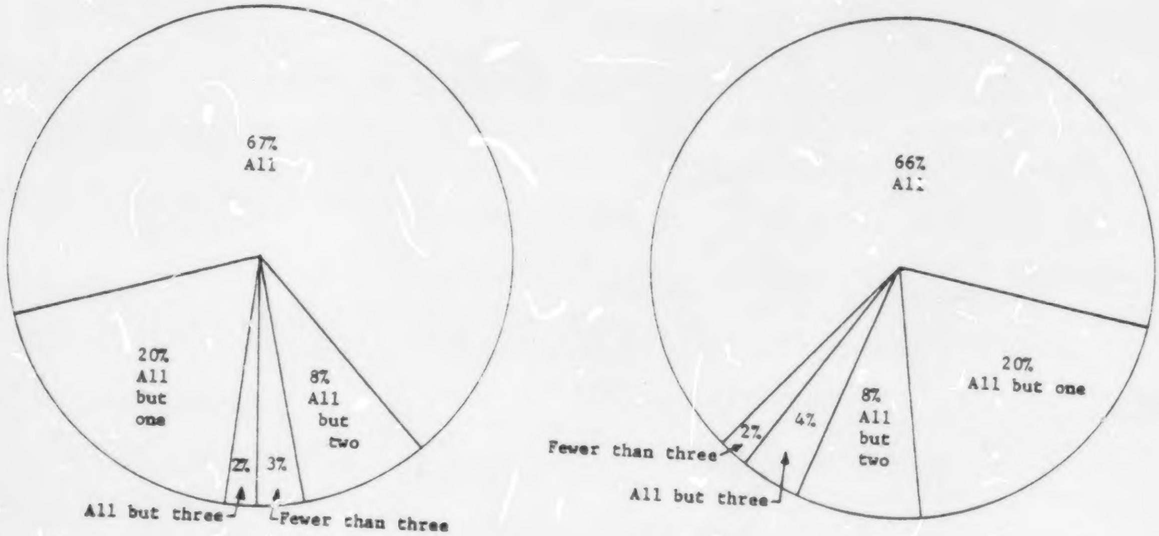


Figure IV-31: HOW MANY DESIRED COURSES DID STUDENTS GET? Percent indicating various responses to the question "How many of the courses you wanted did you get for ______ quarter?" Responses for fall and spring quarters.

24. What problems are perceived with course outlines?

ANSWER: Generally outlines are seen as useful and adequate; some changes anticipated in amount of material covered in each course.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Sr. High Teacher Questionnaire

As illustrated in the figure below, teachers in all subject areas responded generally favorably to questions concerning course outlines. They said by 85% that they usually or sometimes use the goals and objectives suggested and by 76% that they at least sometimes use the instructional methods suggested. Teachers also said that the goals and objectives usually or sometimes meet student learning needs and by 67% that the evaluation methods suggested were usually or sometimes used. The least often used were the equipment and materials suggested, but 58% of teachers used even these usually or sometimes. Teachers also commented on the adequacy of coverage of course outlines as can be seen in Figure IV-33.

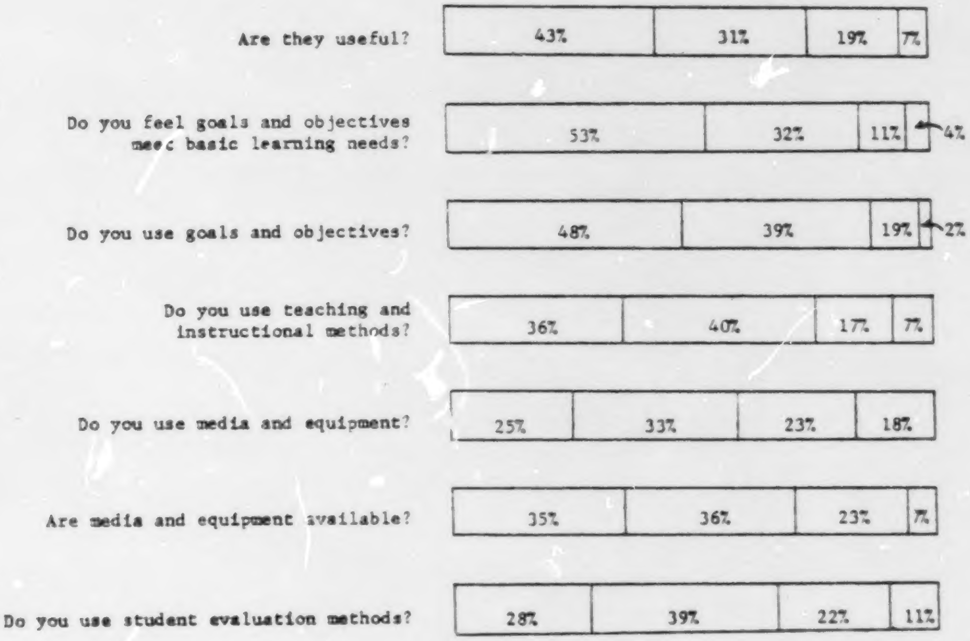


Figure IV-32: TEACHER OPINION ABOUT THE COURSE OUTLINES. Teacher response to various questions about the course outlines. Percent giving, from left to right, the responses "usually", "sometimes", "seldom", or "never".

Teacher Questionnaire--Social Studies Form

Social studies teachers said that generally they find the course outlines useful, that their format and general aim is valid and that they used the materials and suggestions from the outlines.

Coordinator Interviews

Most coordinators said that there were at least a few changes anticipated for course outlines for next year. The bulk of these involved either eliminating some course content from the outline (5 responses) or combining of outlines that proved not to contain enough material (4 responses). Six coordinators said no changes in course outlines were anticipated in their areas.

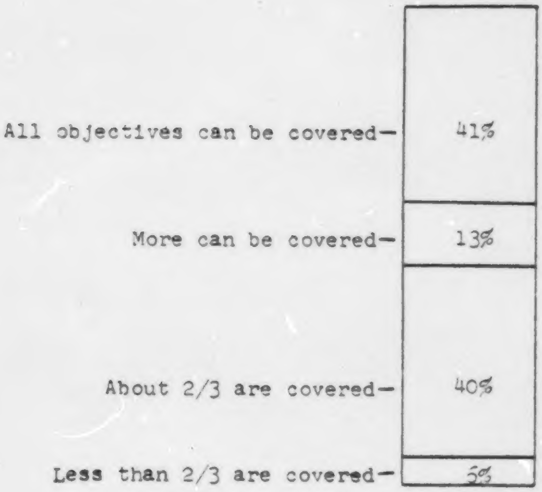


Figure IV-33: ADEQUACY OF COVERAGE OF COURSE OUTLINES AS SEEN BY TEACHERS ON FALL QUESTIONNAIRE.

25a. What level of and priority for financial support are indicated by district personnel for materials?

ANSWER: More financial support is needed for materials; highest priority.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Secondary Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

In the fall, 57% said that additional financial support for materials was needed with 35% being undecided; by spring this had risen to 79% with only 15% undecided. In addition, at both times the need for additional materials funding was placed as the highest priority ahead of funding for other purposes such as equipment, inservice, personnel, etc.

Coordinator Interviews

A large majority of the instructional coordinators (13 of 16) saw definate materials needs for next year. One-half said this need was for textbooks, another 6 mentioned supplies, and 4 said the need was for equipment. The vast majority listed materials and equipment as the highest priority for funding.

Principal Interviews

Lack of materials and texts was noted as a problem by principals both fall and spring; 8 of 9 indicated in the spring that these should have highest priority.

Teacher Interviews

A large majority (86%) said that additional financial support was needed for the high schools and the highest priority was given to additional teaching materials; 52 of the 83 teachers placed this first.

25b. What level of and priority for financial support are indicated by district personnel for course outlines?

ANSWER: Little additional.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Coordinator Interviews

None of the coordinators felt that course outlines should be a priority for funding.

Teacher Interviews

Although a large majority of teachers saw a need for additional financial support, course outlines were not mentioned as a priority item.

Principal Interviews

Although principals saw course outlines as valuable, they did not give it high priority for funding.

25c. What level of and priority for financial support are indicated by district personnel for inservice?

ANSWER: Some additional, but not high priority.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Secondary Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

This group was the one most in favor of additional financial support for inservice. In the fall, 80% of those answering said additional support was needed in this area, but placed it 4th in overall ranking of priorities; in the spring a similar pattern emerged, with 71% favoring additional support for inservice but ranking it 5th in priority to other areas.

Coordinator Interviews

Three of the 16 instructional coordinators stated a high priority for additional inservice funding; this was a much smaller group than those seeing a need for additional money in areas such as materials and equipment.

Teacher Interviews

Of the 86% answering that additional funding was needed for the high schools, only 2 placed inservice amoung the priority items for such funding

25d. What level of and priority for financial support are indicated by district personnel for other areas?

ANSWER: Additional funding needs seen for the following: registration procedures and data processing for scheduling; additional personnel; time for department chairpersons and equipment.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Secondary Non-Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

In the fall, registration procedures was ranked 1st amoung funding priorities and support for additional personnel second. In spring, these needs were still present but were not ranked as high as in the fall. The 3rd-rank area in fall was for additional equipment and this too fell to 6th in spring.

Coordinator Interviews

Three coordinators felt that funding should be given to provide an additional conference period for department chairpersons.

Teacher Interviews

The primary additional funding area seen by teachers, ranking lower than materials, was additional personnel. Specifically, a need for additional personnel in the form of clerical help such as departmental aides was cited as a high priority by 27 of 83 teachers.

26. How reliable and valid are the placement tests used in conjunction with the Orientation to Language Arts and Introduction to Science courses?

ANSWER: The Science Proficiency Test has reasonable reliability; validity is still under study. The reliability of the Orientation to Language Arts Needs Assessment Test was also high; because the test was undergoing major modifications no extensive validity studies were carried out; the content validity seems high, however.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Science Proficiency Test

The reliability found for the 1976 administration of the Science Proficiency Test was .87--indicating that most students taking it again would tend to perform about the same on it the second time. Information gathered from students who passed the test during 1975 indicated that these students do indeed do well in advanced science courses without the introductory course. Students and teachers agreed that these students were ready for more advanced courses; most of these students made A's in their science courses and virtually all the rest made B's. Information about which students had taken the test but failed it in 1975 was not available--however, the students who failed it in 1976 will be studied to see if some of them could probably do well in advanced courses also, or whether the failure to attain a passing score on the test does indicate that a student needs to take the Introduction to Science course.

Orientation to Language Arts Needs Assessment Test (OLA test)

The reliability found for a sample of students taking the OLA test was over .9, indicating that these students would be very likely to perform similarly if given the test again. (This would not be the case, for instance, if the students made many guesses). However, it was clear from examination of the number of students passing various items and various subscales that the test needed major revisions in some areas. For this reason no additional studies were undertaken of the old test.

Note: Validity is the accuracy with which a test measures what it is supposed to measure--science proficiency, for instance, rather than reading ability. Reliability is the consistency with which a test yields the same result when used several times to measure the same thing. The reliability calculated for these tests was the Kuder-Richardson coefficient of internal consistency.

27. Are students unable to take requested courses because of lack of transportation to other schools where they are offered?

ANSWER: Yes in some cases.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Course Offerings Data

From the printout of course offerings available to students on the request survey sheet for next year, a percentage of the 698 possible courses was calculated of those courses offered at less than one-half of the high schools. This percentage was 30.5%. This means that almost one-third of the courses in the course description were not available to students at at least five schools.

Parent Questionnaire

Only 7% of parents in fall and 5% in spring said that their child was unable to take certain desired courses because they were offered only at other schools and transportation was not available.

Student Questionnaire

Sixty-seven percent of fall students and 66% in the spring said they got all of the courses they wanted. Another 19% (fall) and 20% (spring) got all but one course wanted. Only 3% in fall and 2% in spring got fewer than three of desired courses. Unavailability at the student's school and lack of transportation to other schools may have been a factor in some of these cases.

Regarding the college-bound/non-college-bound preparation question, parents are again more favorable than teachers. Seventy-four percent of parents responding in spring said that their child was getting the courses he/she needed for college. Also, 84% of parents of non-college-bound made a similar response. The majority of all parents responding felt their children were required to take the right number of courses in both English and math.

The one unfavorable area about AISD education that parents saw was discipline. The change from fall to spring is quite notable in this area: in the fall only 22% of parents said discipline was handled badly in Austin schools, while in the spring this rose to 42%. Correspondingly, those feeling it was handled fairly well fell from 52% (fall) to 34% (spring). On the same matter, a majority of teachers at both times saw no effect of the quarter system upon discipline, but those saying discipline was worse this year rose from 6% in the fall to 17% in the spring.

On the whole, a majority of 77% of parents said AISD schools were average or above; this figure changed very little from fall to spring.

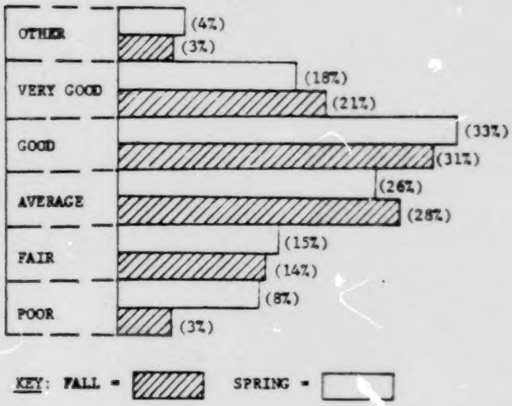


Figure IV-34: PARENT ATTITUDE TOWARD AISD SCHOOLS. Percent of parents giving various responses to the question "On the whole, how do you rate education in AISD?" Percent giving the responses presented for fall and spring.

28. How satisfied are parents and teachers with high school education in Austin?

ANSWER: Parents are fairly well satisfied with academic and overall education; they are not satisfied with the disciplinary aspect of education. Teachers generally do not see the college-bound student as getting good preparation and question that of the non-college-bound.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Teacher Interviews

Teachers split into four roughly equal groups regarding the adequacy of the college-bound students' preparation; the groups are the quarter system as better preparing the college-bound, as preparing the same as the semester system, as preparing less-well than the semester system and don't know. An important change to notice is that teachers saying the quarter system offered better preparation fell from 46% in the fall interviews to 29% in the spring and those saying the preparation was less adequate than under the semester system rose from 6% to 20%. These are significant changes and may reflect a real deficiency of the new system in the area of offerings and requirements for the college-bound student.

For the non-college-bound, the trend is the same, but the magnitude of the shift in teacher opinion is not as great. A drop of 13% from 56 to 43 for better preparation under the quarter system and a substantial rise, from 2% to 14%, in the quarter system as less well preparing can be seen in this area. Even so, only somewhat over 1/3 of the teachers interviewed see a need for more required courses and the majority do see the quarter system as an improvement.

Parent Questionnaire

Parents are generally more favorable than teachers in assessing academic quality in AISD. Sixty percent of parents in the spring felt that their child could obtain as many of the basic skills under the quarter system as under the semester. Also the percent of parents expressing various opinions of school last year (semester system) and school this year (quarter system) was almost exactly equal in all catagories--very good through poor.

29a. What was the attitude of parents and teachers toward shorter terms?

ANSWER: Parents generally favorable; teachers mixed.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Parent Questionnaire

The change from fall to spring opinion was very small; at both times the majority favored the shorter terms by about 60%.

Teacher Interviews

Teachers were much more mixed on their opinion. There was little change from fall to spring; at both times the number of teachers seeing the shorter terms as advantageous approximately equalled the number seeing them as disadvantageous. Advantages cited compared to the 18-week terms were higher student and teacher interest, less wasted time, more chance to explore various subject areas and more interactions between the teachers and student body. Disadvantages were seen as more paperwork for grading, scheduling, and registration, difficulty of developing student/teacher rapport and lack of continuity due to frequent shifts of students between quarters.

29b. What is the attitude of parents and teachers toward the greater variety of courses?

ANSWER: Very favorable.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Teacher Interviews

Although the teachers' enthusiasm for the new curriculum had declined somewhat from fall to spring, the majority was still very much in favor of the greater course variety. Many more teachers viewed the new curriculum as an advantage than a disadvantage; approximately 15% in the spring mentioned the curriculum as an area still needing changing or improving.

Parent Questionnaire

The majority of parents felt that their children were required to take the right number of courses in math and English and that the number of courses offered this year under the new curriculum was generally satisfactory. On the negative side, one fourth responded in the spring that there were too few courses required in English; however, only 10% said there was an inadequate supply of English courses available.

29c. What is the attitude of parents and teachers toward the new curriculum in general?

ANSWER: Parents favorable; teachers mixed.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Parent Questionnaire

Parents feel that their children can obtain as many basics as under the semester system; they also feel that the number of English and math courses required is adequate and that the skills received in these courses are also adequate. The majority also do not view the new curriculum as having too many electives, although about a fourth of the spring responses indicated that there were too many.

Teacher Interviews

The majority opinion among teachers is that there is adequate sequencing of courses under the new curriculum. Approximately one-half feel that more specific courses need to be required, with many suggestions for what these should be. Even though teachers, in general, viewed the new curriculum as having more advantages than disadvantages, there were certain important drawbacks. Operating under the quarter system required much more time outside of class for 75% of teachers interviewed; this was up from 66% in the fall. The activities consuming the most extra time were multiple preparations, establishing new courses and creating and obtaining materials. Inservice needs relating to the new curriculum were also seen as changed by the quarter system; specific changes were a need for inservice by subareas and courses taught (mentioned by about one-third of the interviewees), and more time at beginning and end of quarters for preparing for new courses to be taught (mentioned by 17% of teachers).

29d. What is the attitude of parents and teachers toward year-round schooling?

ANSWER: In favor in principal; clinging to "summer off" pattern in preference.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Parent Questionnaire

Eighty-four percent (84%) of parents returning questionnaires in the fall and 86% in the spring wanted their children to attend school the three quarters they do now.

Teacher Interviews

Fifty-nine percent in fall and 64% in spring were in favor of year-round schooling; on the other hand, 78% in fall and 73% in spring said they would only want to teach for three of the four quarters. Of the remainder, 13% in fall and 18% in spring would prefer to teach all four quarters. Of those teachers opting for three quarters teaching, 53% initially, falling to 40% during the third quarter, would prefer to have the summer quarter off. A large group (from 13% initially to 29%) would have no preference as to when they were off or were undecided. Seventeen percent expressed a desire for a rotation system for when teachers were off each year.

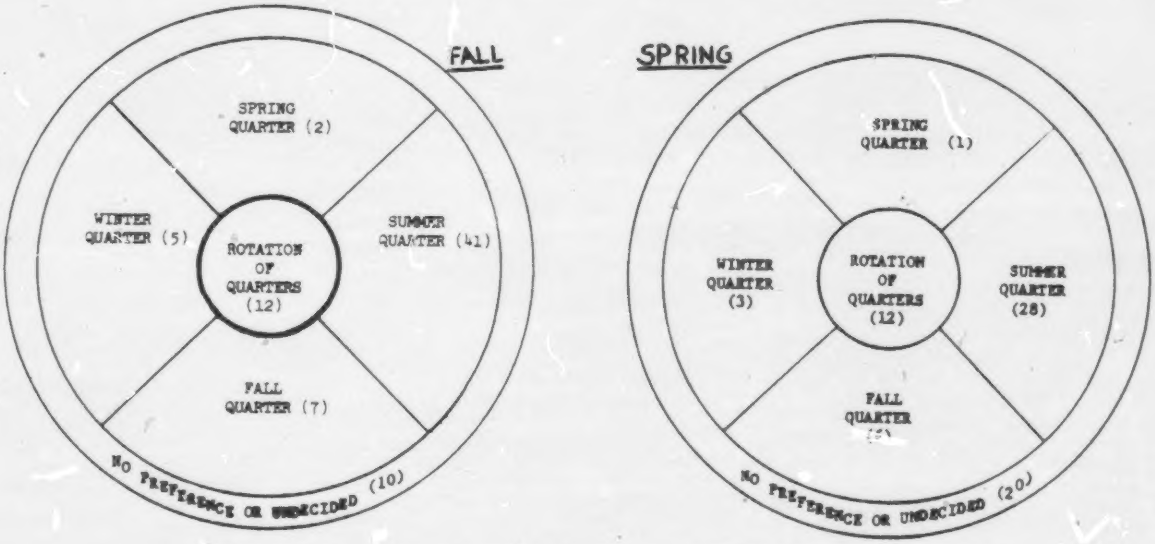


Figure IV-35: TEACHER PREFERENCE FOR TEACHING DIFFERENT QUARTERS. Fall and spring responses to the question "Under year-round schooling, which quarter would you want off?" Number of teachers indicating various alternatives. Fall numbers based on 77 teachers; spring based on 70 teachers.

29e. What is the attitude of teachers toward other quarter system matters?

ANSWER: Scheduling, advising and registration are seen as problem areas.

SUPPORTIVE DATA

Teacher Interviews

Scheduling and advising were seen as major disadvantages of the quarter system by teachers throughout the year. There was, however, a noticeable change in the frequency of times this was mentioned; in the fall almost half of the teachers listed this as a major disadvantage, while in the spring only about a quarter did so. The same pattern is seen with the complaint of registration problems--the fall saw one-third of the interviewees citing this as a major disadvantage, while in the spring this fell to approximately one quarter. These trends probably are reflective of improvements made at the school level in the registration and scheduling process during the year. Registration was still seen as an area needing improvement by one-quarter of the spring teachers and scheduling/advising as a continuing problem by about 40% of those interviewed.

30a. Did parents get adequate communication from the schools regarding the existence of the quarter system?

ANSWER: No for fall; somewhat better in spring.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Although 96% of parents in the fall knew that the schools were operating on a quarter system, only 24% said they received the majority of their information about it from the schools themselves and only 45% said they had received enough information about the quarter system. By the spring, this communication gap had narrowed considerably with a full 100% being aware that the schools were on a quarter system and 66% saying they had received enough information on the quarter system. The percent of parents receiving most of their information from the schools had fallen to 18% in the spring, with the majority (62%) obtaining most information from their child which is only indirectly from the schools themselves.

30b. Did parents get adequate communication from the schools regarding the progress of the quarter system implementation?

ANSWER: Parents had more information about the quarter system in the spring than in the fall.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Parents indicated they had more information in the spring than in the fall; 45% in fall to 66% in spring said they had received enough information on the quarter system. Also fully 100% of parents responding in the spring were aware of the implementation of the quarter system in AISD.

30c. Do parents get adequate communication from the schools regarding the courses available and their characteristics?

ANSWER: Probably no.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Although parents indicated that they had more information in spring on the quarter system in general, there was a small reversal in the responses about information on the new courses available. The percent of parents saying both don't know and "not enough information" rose slightly while those indicating they had received enough information fell slightly. When asked about courses in specific content areas, many parents indicated they did not know if enough were offered or required. In math, this was 18% in spring and in English, 19%; in both cases these figures were similar to the fall. Similarly, 48% indicated they did not know about the course fairs where such information on courses could have been obtained. When asked about whether or not their child was able to take the courses he/she wanted, parents seemed more informed. In the spring 85% said they felt their child got his/her choices and 83% said transportation to another school that offered certain courses was no problem. It appears that parents have a generalized knowledge of whether their student is able to obtain their course choices; they feel, however, that they lack specific information on new curriculum courses and methods of obtaining information.

30d. Do parents get adequate communication from the schools regarding their own children's progress?

ANSWER: No.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

With both administrations of the parent questionnaire, responses indicated a feeling that they are not told enough about their child's progress in school. In the spring, over half of the respondents said that they were not told enough about how their high school student was doing in school. In addition, when asked whether their child's skills in math and language arts were adequate, 33% in the fall and 19% in the spring said they did not know. The change from fall to spring does suggest that some improvements have been made in this area, however.

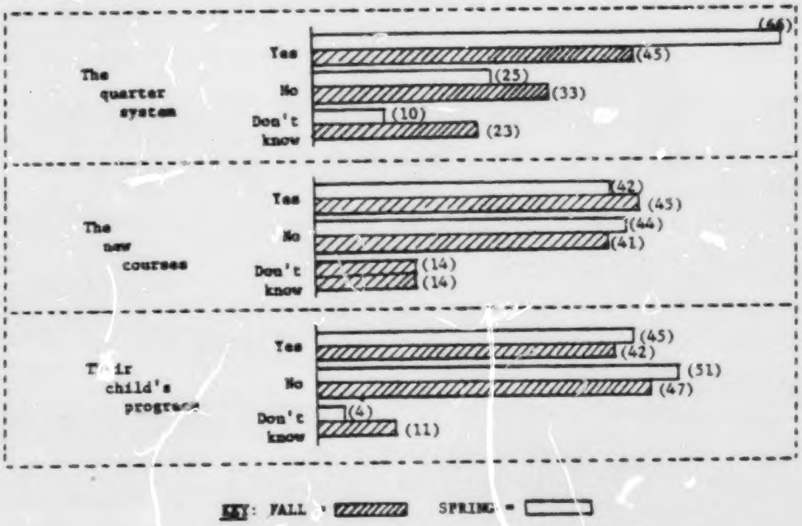


Figure IV-36: PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION FROM THE SCHOOL. Percent of parents giving various responses in the fall and the spring to the question of whether communication from the schools was adequate in the areas listed.

31. From what sources do parents obtain most of their information regarding the quarter system and the high schools?

ANSWER: Probably from their children; not from the schools.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

Parent Questionnaire

Parents received the majority of their quarter system information from their children, especially between the fall and spring administrations of the questionnaire. The next most frequent source was the school, but this fell from a response of 24% in fall to 18% in spring. A majority also feels that they are not told enough about how their child is doing in school Parents knew very little about the course fairs (48% knew nothing about them). Most parents (62%), however, feel that their children do receive enough information at school for deciding on courses; they see the primary source of student information on courses as being the course guides.

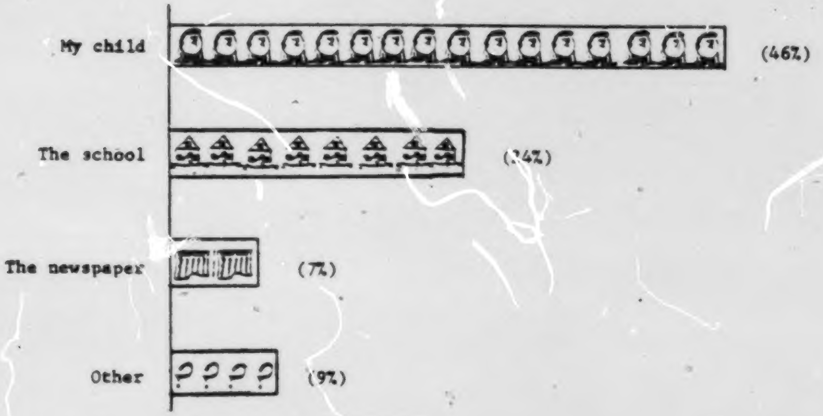


Figure IV-37: SOURCES OF PARENTS' INFORMATION, FALL. Percent of parents giving each alternative to a question about where they received the most information about the quarter system. Fourteen percent of parents did not respond to this item in the fall.

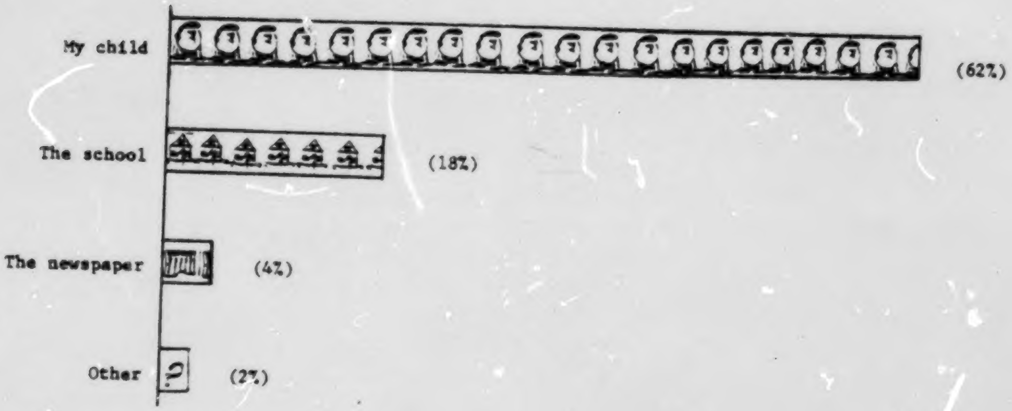


Figure IV-38: SOURCES OF PARENTS' INFORMATION, SPRING. Percent of parents giving each alternative to a question about where they received the most information about the quarter system. Fourteen percent of parents did not respond to this item in the spring.

B. MISCELLANEOUS FINDINGS

During the course of the quarter system evaluation a number of interesting items appeared which were not included in the evaluation questions of this final report. However, we felt some mention should be made of this information, especially of the items which concerned the feelings and opinions of parents, students, teachers or others who were affected by the change to the quarter system.

Parent Information

In reporting parent information relating to decision questions, every effort was made in this final report to be objective and to report all opinions. However, decisions must usually be made based on majority opinions, even though some parents expressed feelings that were unique to them and to their children. Some parents expressed concern over the quarter system final exam schedule. They felt that having only two days of finals placed too much pressure on their children. One parent wrote to AISD stating that her daughter had three difficult courses and that all three finals for these courses fell on the same day.

While more parents responding to questionnaires (49% in spring) felt that discipline in Austin's schools was handled adequately, there remained a significant number (42% in spring) of parents who were truly upset over what they felt to be a lack of discipline in the schools. Some even stated that their children were afraid to ride buses or to visit school restrooms.

Some parents were upset because they feel their children are simply not receiving the guidance they need with personal problems. These personal problems ranged from lack of advice about various colleges and college requirements to emotional difficulties which caused students to relate poorly to teachers and fellow students.

Other parents seemed to have bitter feelings about counselors because they felt counselors did not make themselves available to students. Others were sympathetic stating that they felt counselors were overburdened with work.

While the majority of the parents surveyed by the quarter system evaluation commented either positively or negatively on whether their children were receiving adequate training, a surprisingly large number (in some cases almost one quarter of those surveyed) did not know how their children were doing in school or if children were being offered the proper courses.

The majority of parents were satisfied with most aspects of the quarter system. One group of parents, however, cited problems which should be of particular concern to the district such as lack of time in the shorter terms for students to make up work lost because of illness. Lack of continuity in specific skills courses is also a problem for some students under the quarter system. For example, in English or math courses students are building each new term on skills acquired the previous term. Frequent teacher changes causes confusion for students who feel they only just adjust to the teaching style of one teacher when they must move on to another teacher. Parents are not alone in their concern over this problem--some teachers say valuable teaching time is lost because they must spend time at the beginning of each 12-week term evaluating the individual needs and the skills level of each new student.

Student Information

In a questionnaire sent to former students of AISD, many graduates stated they felt graduation requirements should be more comprehensive. Course enrollment patterns may shed light on whether students are required to take a sufficient number of courses to fulfill their own post graduation plans and whether graduation requirements should be more stringent. The course enrollment data indicate that most course requests are met by the schools and it is presumed that students, in order to graduate, do request and take all required courses. Yet course enrollment data indicate that there are a number of subject areas usually considered important, especially for college-bound students, which have fairly low enrollments. This may be an indication that high schools are offering but not requiring students to take additional courses which would be an added asset in most post graduation endeavors. Student enrollment in various subject areas which have fairly low enrollments in proportion to possible post-graduation value included foreign language, science and math. Both the college-bound and non-college-bound student were found to be taking an equivalent amount of language arts courses indicating that both are probably simply complying with graduation requirements. It is not known whether language arts graduation requirements are as stringent as they should be; however, there are some indications that they may not be, such as complaints from parents that students are not leaving high school with the level of language arts skills they should possess and consistently low scores on language arts sections of the STEP test. Also, course enrollment data revealed that female students are taking fewer courses usually considered of value, especially to the college-bound student, such as advanced math, language and composition, than male students-indicating the possibility that female AISD graduates may be entering college less well prepared than male graduates.

Two additional tables appear below (Tables IV-6 and IV-7) which are included herein because they contain interesting information gleaned from course enrollment patterns.

Table IV-6: COURSE ENROLLMENT SUMMARY DATA. Information about courses offered and course size for nine AISD high schools. Information for first and third quarters based on master schedule. Information for second quarter based on student grade records.

SCHOOL	QUARTER	NUMBER OF COURSES	NUMBER OF SECTIONS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SECTIONS/ COURSE	RANGE OF COURSE SIZE	NUMBER OF COURSES BELOW 16	NUMBER OF COURSES 16-20	NUMBER OF COURSES ABOVE 29
Anderson	Q1	205	626	3.05	1-35	105	33	151
	Q2	232	*					
	Q3	259	648	2.50	1-35	160	87	77
Austin	Q1	183	442	2.42	1-44	108	30	29
	Q2	203	*					
	Q3	242	492	2.03	1-33	60	43	22
Crockett	Q1	197	768	3.90	1-36	104	37	91
	Q2	251	*					
	Q3	279	783	2.80	1-35	186	97	40
LBJ	Q1	192	594	3.09	1-35	219	44	17
	Q2	174	*					
	Q3	239	631	2.64	1-35	293	64	19
Johnston	Q1	159	436	2.74	1-35	119	66	70
	Q2	207	*					
	Q3	216	486	2.25	1-31	223	68	12
Lanier	Q1	213	546	2.56	1-35	100	51	58
	Q2	213	*					
	Q3	241	554	2.30	1-35	143	132	41
McCallum	Q1	188	418	2.22	1-35	151	30	61
	Q2	211	*					
	Q3	217	417	1.92	1-35	166	53	29
Reagan	Q1	212	530	2.50	2-33	158	52	36
	Q2	223	*					
	Q3	266	523	1.97	1-35	184	61	44
Travis	Q1	229	511	2.23	1-42	133	42	118
	Q2	235	*					
	Q3	279	544	3.04	1-37	177	63	51

* The only data collected for second quarter was total number of different courses offered.

Table IV-7: COURSES OFFERED ON THE SURVEY FORM FOR 1976-77. Number of courses offered on the course survey form by each school, percent of total courses offered, and ADA for each school. (There are a total of 698 courses available in the course description).

SCHOOL	ADA	NUMBER OF COURSES OFFERED	PERCENT OF COURSES OFFERED
Anderson	2168	588	84%
Austin	1518	514	74%
Crockett	2635	448	64%
LBJ	1453	412	59%
Johnston	1201	551	79%
Lanier	1920	431	62%
McCallum	1171	512	73%
Reagan	1433	424	61%
Travis	1565	460	66%

ORE was also curious to know what student perceptions were about the number of courses taken in various subject areas. Students were asked if they felt they were required to take too many, the right number or too few courses in the subjects of English, social studies, science, math and P.E. Responses are presented in Table IV-8.

Table IV-8: SECTION OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ASKING STUDENT OPINIONS ON ADEQUACY OF COURSE OFFERINGS.

# of Students Responding		% of Response	
Fall Spring		Fall	Spring
	How do you feel about the number of courses in the following subject areas?		
554,989	English		
	A. Too many	26	33
	B. Just right	60	53
	C. Too few	14	14
553,990	Social Studies		
	A. Too many	16	15
	B. Just right	60	65
	C. Too few	24	15
551,981	Science		
	A. Too many	13	11
	B. Just right	64	68
	C. Too few	23	20
553,987	Math		
	A. Too many	13	15
	B. Just right	72	71
	C. Too few	15	14
553,981	P.E.		
	A. Too many	10	13
	B. Just right	67	62
	C. Too few	24	25

During the course of the evaluation classrooms were visited and this resulted in a number of informal discussions with students. Students sometimes expressed feelings in these discussions which differed from the majority opinions expressed on the questionnaires. Like the parents who are dissatisfied, these students represent a smaller group, but they mention problems of which AISD should be aware. Some quite vocally did not like the quarter system; others were indifferent to the school calendar used. Some also commented that they saw little point to having a quarter system which did not offer four full quarters of instruction.

Other comments made by these students were that they didn't really like changing teachers so often or that they had had many problems getting registered for the courses they wanted to take.

Other findings about students not reported earlier follow and are shown in the figures and tables below.

Average Daily Membership (ADM) and Average Daily Attendance (ADA): Figure IV-39 shows the daily membership of AISD Grades 9 through 12 for the last six years. Membership as a whole has risen over the last six years, reflecting the growth of Austin and AISD. Within any one year, membership drops consistently from the first six week period to the last; there is a gradual decrease through the year that is quite consistent. Total AISD high school ADA, and percent of attendance may be seen in Table IV-9.

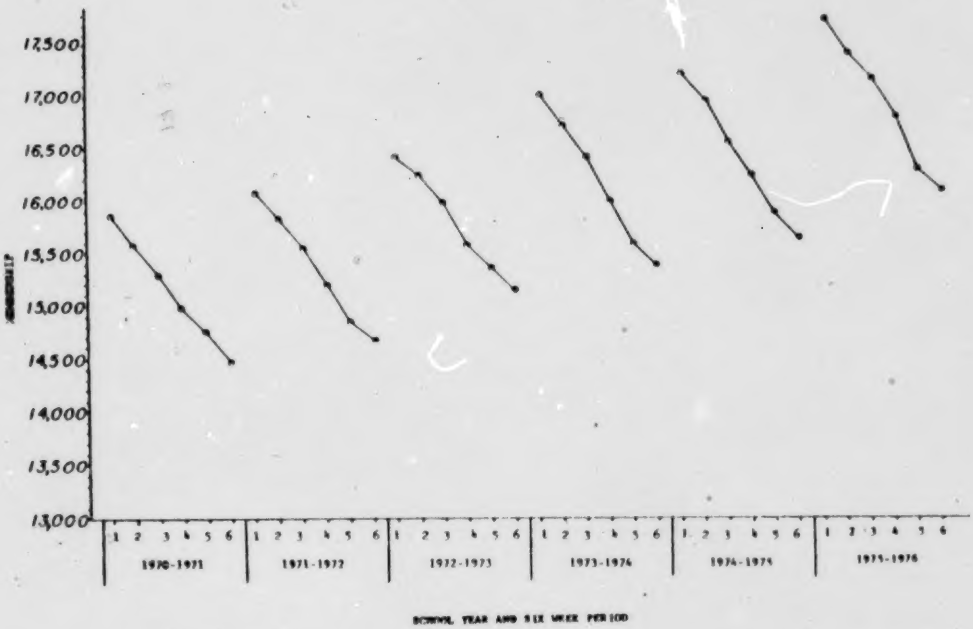


Figure IV-39: 1970 THROUGH 1976 DAILY MEMBERSHIP BY SIX WEEK PERIODS. Total of grades 9-12.

Table IV-9: TOTAL AISD HIGH SCHOOL AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE (ADA); AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP (ADM); AND PERCENT ATTENDANCE(%).

SIX WEEK PERIOD	1970-1971			1971-1972			1972-1973			1973-1974			1974-1975			1975-1976		
	ADA	ADM	%	ADA	ADM	%	ADA	ADM	%	ADA	ADM	%	ADA	ADM	%	ADA	ADM	%
1	13685	14701	93	13702	14853	92	14056	15144	93	15628	17043	92	15725	17188	91	16377	17783	92
2	13324	14420	92	13260	14628	91	13579	14866	91	14894	16734	89	15148	16946	89	15640	17424	90
3	12863	14143	91	12763	14344	89	12961	14614	89	14336	16435	87	14573	16549	88	15171	17171	88
4	12546	13827	91	12425	13970	89	12766	14199	90	13680	15979	86	14369	16263	88	14774	16804	88
5	12135	13614	89	12144	13661	89	12323	12978	88	13568	15579	87	13871	15884	87	14459	[illegible]	89
6	12001	13381	90	11840	13470	88	12147	13773	88	13394	15362	87	13500	15647	86	14053	[illegible]	87
YEAR TOTAL	12759	14074	91	12689	14259	89	12972	14517	89	14250	16298	87	14531	16501	88	15064	17002	89

NOTE: For years 1970-71,1971-72,and 1972-73, two high schools included 10th, 11th, and 12th grades only.

This drop in membership is costly to the district, which hires teachers to provide for all students enrolled at the beginning of the year, and still has those teachers when the enrollment has decreased by approximately 1500 students. The quarter system may either intensify the problem by allowing more early graduations, or relieve it by having fewer dropouts because of the more flexible curriculum. Data for the 1975-1976 school year will be compared in future evaluations to data from the past to examine what effect, if any, the quarter system does have.

The ADM data will also provide a basis for examining various other records (such as the number of drop-outs and the number of students graduating) which are influenced by the size of enrollment.

Figure IV-40 provides a graph by six week periods of the average size of an AISD high school. The size rose for three years, as Anderson closed and AISD grew, then fell for two years as the new Anderson and LBJ were opened. The movement of the ninth grades to the high schools also explains some of the increase; however, the average size is now only slightly larger than when the ninth grades were first shifted. While the quarter system should have little effect on average school size as long as it is not a year-round program, an increase in school size could provide a strong reason for attempting a shift to year-round schooling. It might also provide an explanation for trends in other data which might be affected by school size. In the 1975-76 school year, average sizes again appears to be rising.

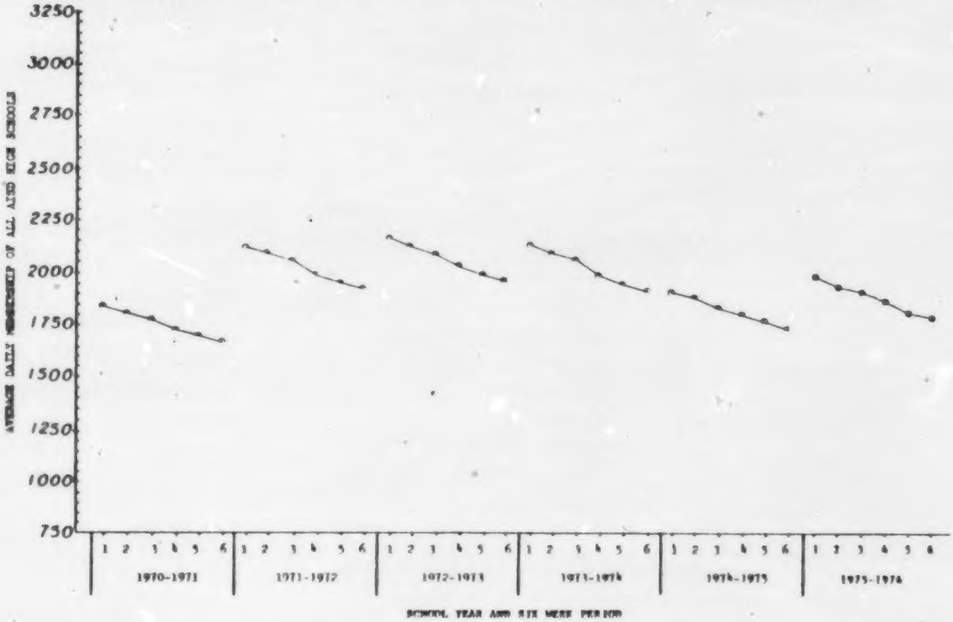


Figure IV-40: SCHOOL SIZE. 1970-1976 average of all AISD high school average daily memberships by six week periods.

Figure IV-41 shows the ADA for six years as a percent of ADM. Over the six years these data also show a consistent downward trend of three to five percentage points from the beginning of the year to the end. As they are already expressed as a percent of ADM, this means that fewer students are still enrolled at the end of the year, and of those, fewer yet are coming to school. Thus the district, which receives state monies on the basis of ADA, is being penalized still further. Under the semester system ADA showed some tendency to level off or increase at the beginning of each semester. The first year of the quarter system showed a decline at the beginning of the second quarter, but a rise at the beginning of the third.

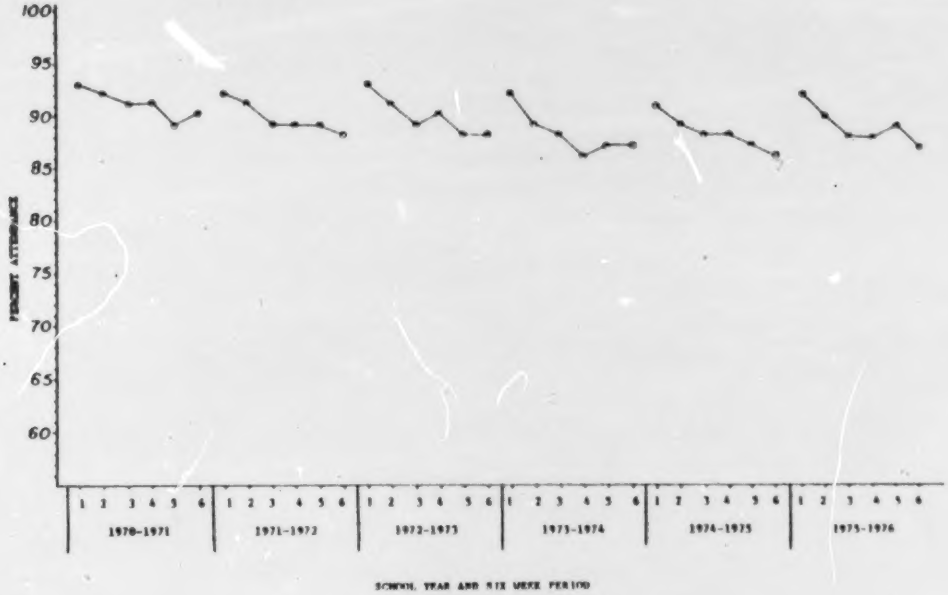


Figure IV-41: 1970-1976 PERCENT ATTENDANCE. By six week periods of AISD high school membership.

The faster pace of twelve week terms and the greater variety of courses might have contributed to an increase in ADA for the quarter system, third quarter. On the other hand, with many courses to choose from, the likelihood of misplacement was increased; this may have had a detrimental effect on attendance. Trends of ADA will continue to be examined in the future for further evidence of any of these patterns. Several years will be required to establish whether new trends are in fact occurring, since ADA in any one year can be unduly influenced by weather or illness. ADA also shows a slight drop from year to year; although this drop is not consistent, it suggests that other factors are affecting ADA. This will also be considered when interpreting future ADA data.

__Drop-Out Data__: Figure IV-42 shows the drop-out rate in AISD for the last three years as a percent of ADM in ninth through twelfth grades. The rate is approximately 7.5%, with some fluctuation. There is no suggestion of an upward or downward trend for the three years for which the data are available (previous to 1972-1973 drop-out data were collected in another form). It is hoped that the quarter system, by offering a greater variety of courses more tailored to individuals' needs, will encourage students to remain in school longer. The change in graduation requirements and the requirements of a minimum math and reading competency may also have an affect on the drop-out rate. As the drop-outs contribute to the decline in enrollment, and therefore in state financing received, it is of considerable importance to see what effect the quarter system may have on this variable. Drop-out data for 1975-76 will be available later in 1976; at that time these data will be examined.

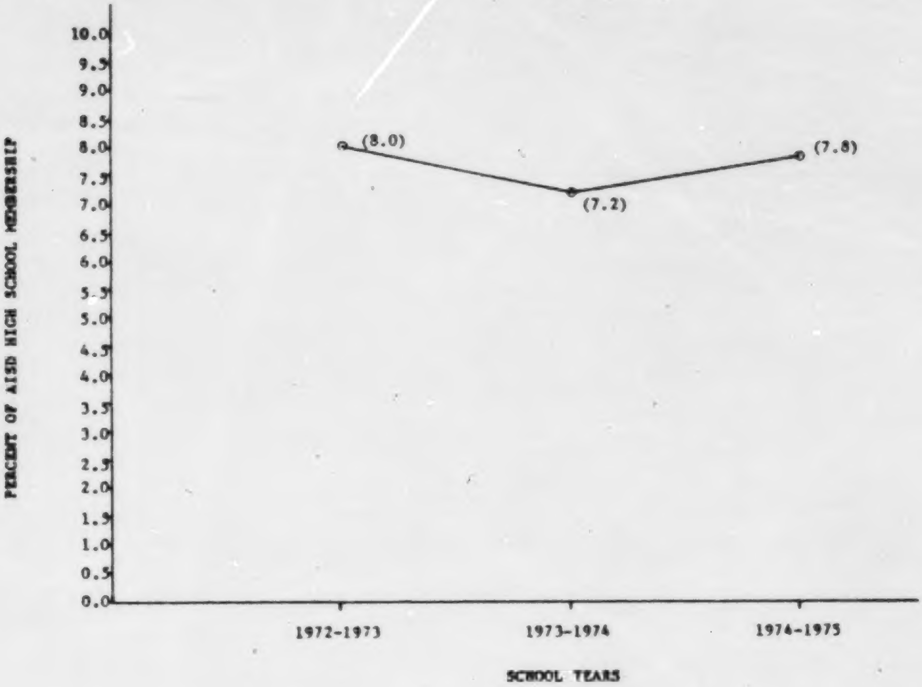


Figure IV-42: PERCENT DROPOUTS OF AISD HIGH SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP OVER A THREE YEAR PERIOD. Defined as those students fourteen years of age or older who left school prior to graduation and, to the best of the District's knowledge, will not enroll in another school.

Discipline Data: Discipline data have been collected for several years; however, the procedure became well standardized only during the 1974-1975 school year. Therefore only that year's data are used. During 1974-1975 there were a total of 1026 discipline incidents reported to the Department of Student Development during the fall semester and a total of 852 incidents reported during the spring semester. Discipline incidents are here considered to be long and short term suspensions and corporal punishment. The total percent of students disciplined during the 1974-1975 school year was 7.2%.

The quarter system may have had a variety of effects on discipline. (Future evaluations of the quarter system will aid in determining whether the quarter system does affect discipline). The shorter terms make it harder to catch up after a short term suspension, but reduce the wait to re-enter school after a long-term suspension. The shorter courses may hold student interest better, presumably reducing discipline problems; on the other hand, the difficulty in choosing the appropriate courses is intensified by the variety of courses available. This results in student misplacement and in some students dropping courses but being unable to replace them with others. Each of these factors may have an impact on discipline. In addition, the data from 1974-1975 show a drop from fall to spring. If this drop reflects the change of semesters, it is possible that the three quarters will show a somewhat different pattern. The data available will be examined to see whether any of these possible effects are in fact occurring. The 1975-76 data will be available later.

College Entrance Examination Board: The CEEB administers the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to students requesting it at various times during the school year. Although this test is administered to a self-selected sample, it is nonetheless interesting to examine the results, particularly in view of the nationwide finding that SAT scores have been declining. SAT scores for the district as a whole have been available since the 1972-1973 school year.

The figure on the following page (Figure IV-43) shows the AISD and national average on the verbal and math sections of the SAT. AISD students score higher than the national average in both verbal and math aptitude. The average math score is consistently higher than the verbal, a pattern which matches the national trends. AISD students also reflect the downward trend in verbal aptitude which is typical of scores nationwide. Their math decline, however, has been minimal. Figure IV-44 shows the distribution of verbal scores for the last three years. Over the last three years there has been a small but consistent increase in the number of students scoring in the lowest categories-- below 400. Contrary to national trends, which have found a decrease in the number of students scoring very high, AISD has had about the same percentage scoring in the top three groups (above 650) each year. Thus the lower average seems to result from more students at the low end, rather than fewer at the high end. This is not a result of more minority group students taking the test, however. The percent of non-Anglo students taking the SAT was 11% in 1972-73, 13% in 1973-74 and 12% in 1974-75. These data indicate no clear trend. The 1975-76 SAT data will be available in August 1976; they will be analysed at that time.

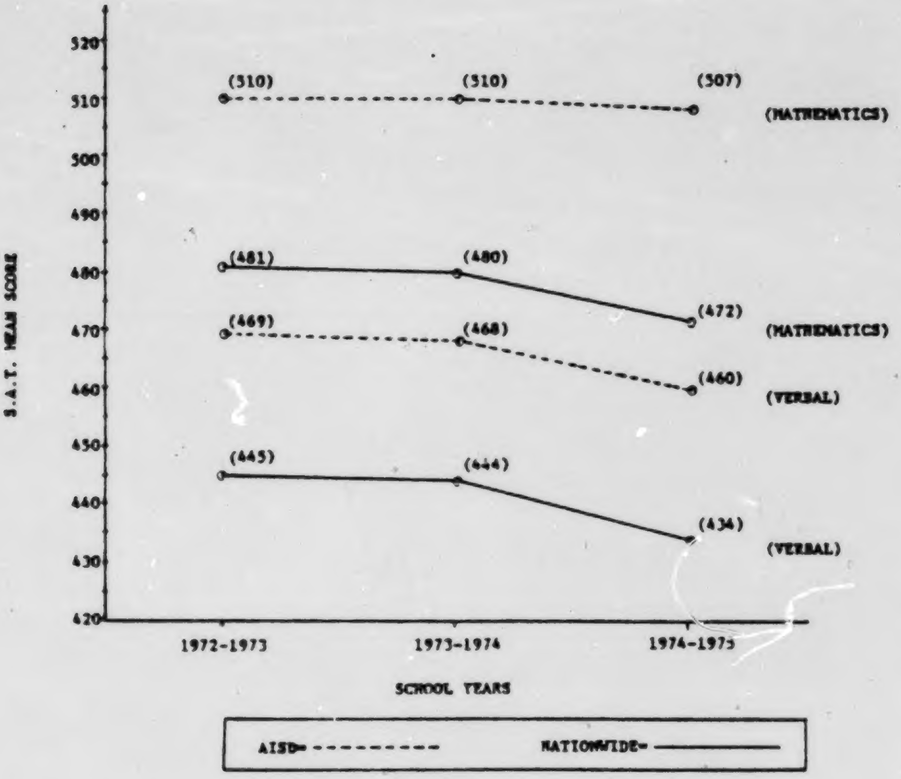
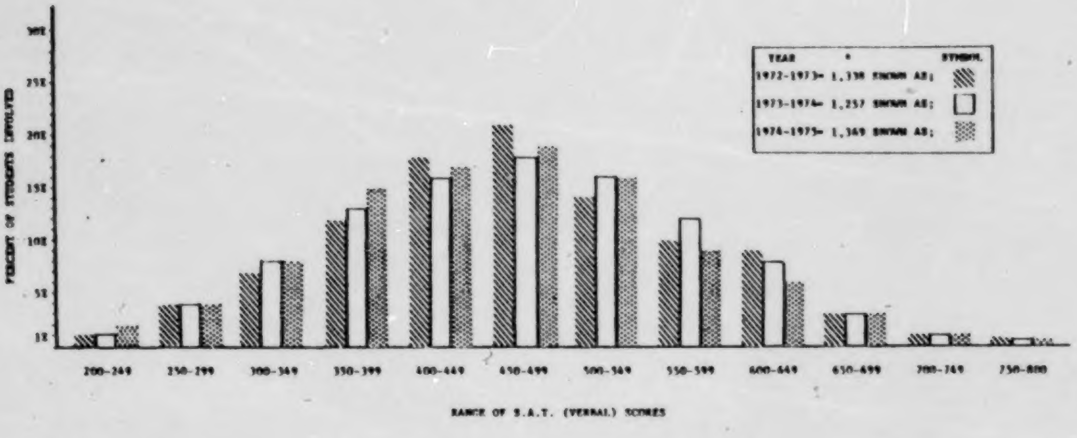


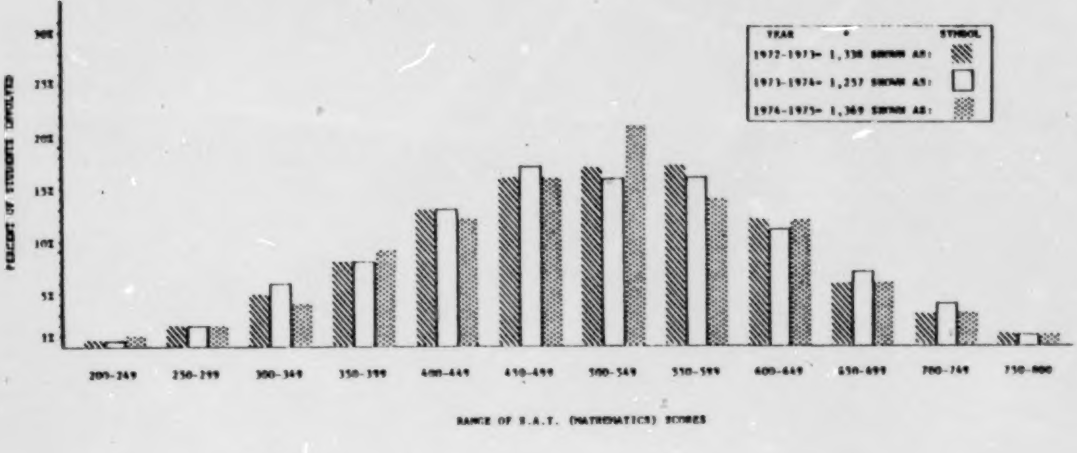
Figure IV-43: S.A.T. (MEAN) SCORES. AISD compared to nationwide for 1972-1975; data acquired from CEEB.



*TOTAL NUMBER OF AISD STUDENTS TAKING THE S.A.T.

Figure IV-44: AISD FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION (BY PERCENTAGE) of S.A.T. VERBAL SCORES FOR 1972-75. Data acquired from CEEB.

The distribution for math is shown in Figure IV-45. There is no consistent pattern of change in this distribution across years-- which might be expected from the minimal change in district average.



*TOTAL NUMBER OF AISD STUDENTS TAKING THE S.A.T.

Figure IV-45: AISD FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION (BY PERCENTAGE) OF S.A.T. MATHEMATICS SCORES FOR 1972-75. Data acquired from CEEB.

A number of theories have been suggested for the nationwide drop in SAT scores. These range from the effect of television to the change in school curriculum. Some of the possible theories assume that the difference in scores reflects a real nationwide drop in the abilities measured by the SAT and look at factors which might influence this achievement. Others concentrate on the possible reasons having to do with students tested. The SAT is a self-selecting sample. The only students taking it are those who request it. Thus it could be affected by early acceptance policies, which lead to more students taking the test only in 11th grade, by the increased number of minority group students taking the test, or by a number of other factors. The full reasons are not known, and probably will not be for some time.

Because the SAT scores are from a self-selected sample, it was felt that some information about the sample would be useful. Figure IV-46 shows the percent of AISD high school students who were included in the SAT report each year. The drop in scores may be partly explained by a larger number of students taking the test. The percent of seniors taking the test has risen slightly over the last three years.

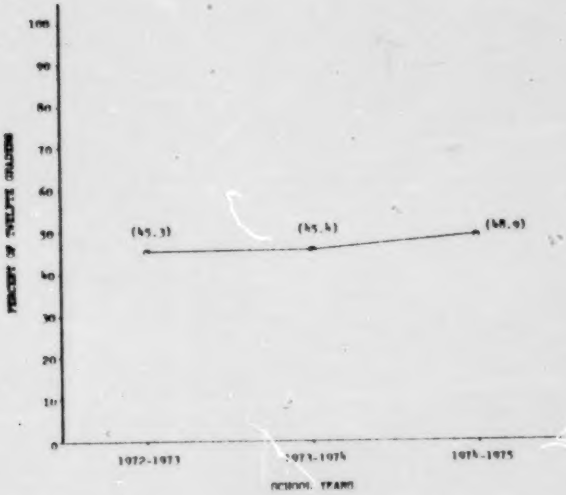


Figure IV-46: PERCENT OF AISD TWELFTH GRADERS TAKING THE S.A.T. DURING 1972-75. Data acquired from CEEB.

CEEB reports data on parental income of the students taking the SAT. These data are from student report, and may therefore not be completely accurate; however, whatever inaccuracies exist probably do not change greatly from year to year. Average reported income for the AISD students taking the SAT for the last three years is shown in Figure IV-47. Income reported has risen steadily. This rise no doubt reflects primarily inflation; however, there is again no suggestion that SAT scores might have dropped because the sample of students requesting the test has changed.

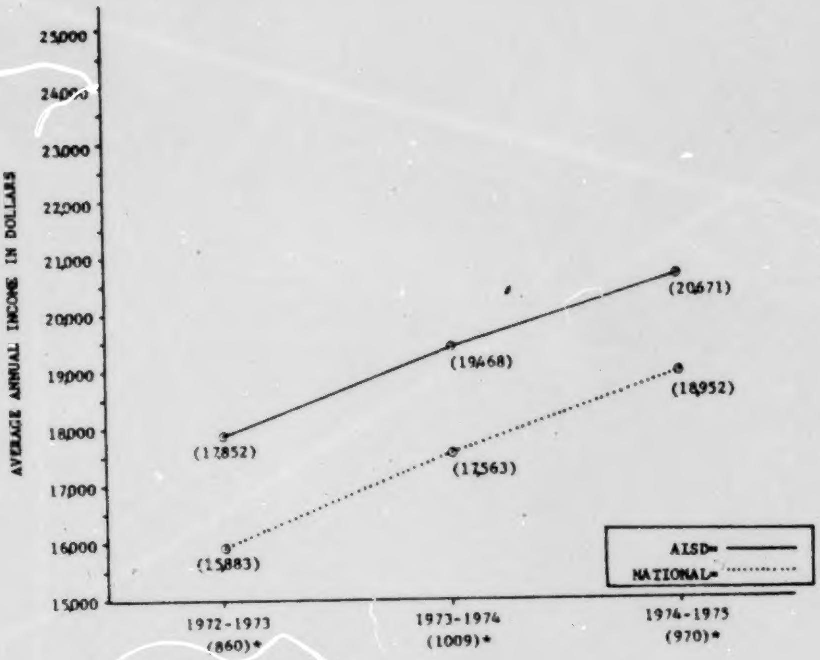


Figure IV-47: AVERAGE PARENTAL INCOME REPORTED BY STUDENTS TAKING THE S.A.T. FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS. Data acquired from CEEB.

Although SAT scores are indicative of the performance of only a small segment of AISD's students, they are a barometer of what is happening to students who are interested in college. If the quarter system has resulted in a watered down curriculum, as some people feel, this will eventually show up in such places as CEEB scores. If, on the other hand, it provides an opportunity for enrichment and indepth study, this also should eventually affect the SAT scores. Therefore the quarter system evaluation will continue to examine SAT scores, along with such indications of other influences such as those presented above.

Several kinds of data have been gathered in AISD in the past which will be of use in evaluating the effects of the quarter system. These data have been presented, and some indication of the trends which exist and the possible effect of the quarter system on these trends has been made. As data from the 1975-1976 school year and later years become available, these variables will be examined again.

Teacher Information

There were two questions asked of teachers during interviews which are not included in the evaluation questions of this document: "How do you feel about the staff development activities of the district" and "Do you feel the district did enough preparation and planning before beginning the quarter system." In response to the former, teacher opinion was about evenly divided on whether district activities were useful. About one-half said they were satisfactory to good and about one-half said they were a waste of time. In response to the latter question, more teachers questioned in the fall felt enough planning had been done (54%) than in the spring (45%).

The teacher interviews revealed that by and large, teachers are satisfied with the methods of assigning courses in their schools. Course assignments were made based on teacher preference or qualifications or on department chairperson or principal decision which considered teacher preferences. Some teachers said they were certified or hired only for the particular areas they are teaching. A few teachers said assignments were made solely by principals. There is an interesting inconsistency here in that all nine principals said teaching assignments were made by department chairpersons working with teachers in each department.

Teacher interviews also revealed that some teachers felt there is a need for additional personnel, especially clerical, in the schools. The majority teacher opinion was described in Section IVA, Evaluation Questions. It should be mentioned, however, that other teachers felt a need for additional teachers (13 respondents), administrators (3 respondents) and counselors (6 respondents).

School Support Personnel Information

Mention should be made in this miscellaneous section regarding those school support personnel who were not necessarily included in the formal attitudinal studies done by the quarter system evaluation. Conversations with office personnel revealed that these people also have real concerns about the quarter system and yet have had no forum for expressing their needs and attitudes. Due to the many added responsibilities entailed in having students plan schedules and register for three terms a year rather than two, all office personnel such as attendance clerks, registrars, secretaries, etc. are called upon to adjust to and handle many additional duties.

Principal Information

Principals, of all the people surveyed by the quarter system evaluation, have probably been in the best position to judge the efficacy and overall response to the quarter system. In general, principals have demonstrated a very positive attitude, although they have been perceptive in pointing out some of the continuing problems of quarter system implementation, such as scheduling and registration problems and the amount of time required of administrators and other personnel. Principals have also been complimentary to students and personnel within their schools. Some comments made by principals were that teachers had been enthusiastic and have offered a great deal of input; that problems of adjustment to the quarter system have been minimized by advance planning and effort; and that students have generally settled down to work faster than in the past.

Principals also offered constructive criticisms which should be of great value to the district in the future. For the quarter system evaluation, principals and their staffs have been extremely helpful and should be commended by ORE for their help and cooperativeness in our evaluation effort.

GLOSSARY

Affective behavior - Those learning values dealing primarily with motivation, feelings, attitudes, interests, appreciations and values.

CIPO - An evaluation model designed by the AISD Office of Research and Evaluation. It's purpose is to provide procedures for evaluating the special programs of the district through use of inputs, processes, and outcomes. The evaluation is aimed at providing information to decision makers.

Cognitive behavior - The recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.

Conclusion - A decision, judgement, or influence arrived at by reasoning or deductions from data.

Criterion - A standard.

Data - Bits of information.

Decision making - Making choices among alternatives.

Decision Questions - A formulation of decision alternatives or explorations for decision alternatives in interrogative terms which can serve as formats for the later presentation of decision recommendations based on evaluation information.

Evaluation - The process of determining the value or effectiveness of something for the purpose of making decisions.

Evaluation, Context - Evaluating the planning of the program in relation to the environment in which it will or did operate.

Evaluation criteria - A statement of acceptable standards to be used in the evaluation process.

Evaluation Design - A predetermined strategy for judging the effects of a program.

Evaluation Input - Analysis of the resources available to a program.

Evaluation Process - Judging the effectiveness of the activities and procedures of a program.

Measurement - Determining differences, represented by numbers, between items.

Median - The middle score or number in a distribution.

Mode - The score that occurs most frequently in a distribution.

Model - An example suitable for imitation or reproduction.

Norm - The average score or typical performance for a specified group.

Norm group - It consists of those persons selected to be representative of specified populations, such as third graders in the United States or applicants for specified types of jobs.

Outcomes - The term refers to any student behavior whether affective, cognitive, or psychomotor, whether covert or overt, intended or unintended.

Percentile - A score below which a given percentage of scores lie.

Priority - What activity or item to which resources are allocated in preference to others.

Quartile - Quarters; the 25, 50, and 75 percentile.

Range - The scale distance between the highest and the lowest score.

Rank order (rating) - Listing scores or other items in order from the highest to the lowest or lowest to highest.

Reliability - The extent to which a test gives the same results each time it is given.

Sample - A systematic selection of a portion of the total group.

Sample, random - One in which each element of the sample has an equal and independent chance of being selected.

Sample, representative - One that has as nearly as possible the same characteristics as the original population.

Sequential Tests of Educational Progress - (STEP) A battery of achievement tests designed to measure student skills in the academic areas of Reading, English Expression, Mechanics of Writing, Mathematics Computation and Concepts, Social Studies and Science.

Standard - An acceptable level of performance.

Stanines - A unit of a standard score scale that divides the norm population into nine groups.

Test - A general term used to designate any kind of device or procedure for measuring ability, achievement, interest, and other traits.

Test, achievement - A test of how well a student can perform a given task.

Test, norm referenced - A test which compares a student's achievement with a population of similar students.

Test, standardized - A test that is administered and scored with uniformity of procedure.

Validity - The extent to which a test or other measuring instrument actually measures what was intended to be measured.